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A GUIDEBOOK TO THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

BY

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AMHERST COLLEGE

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TO

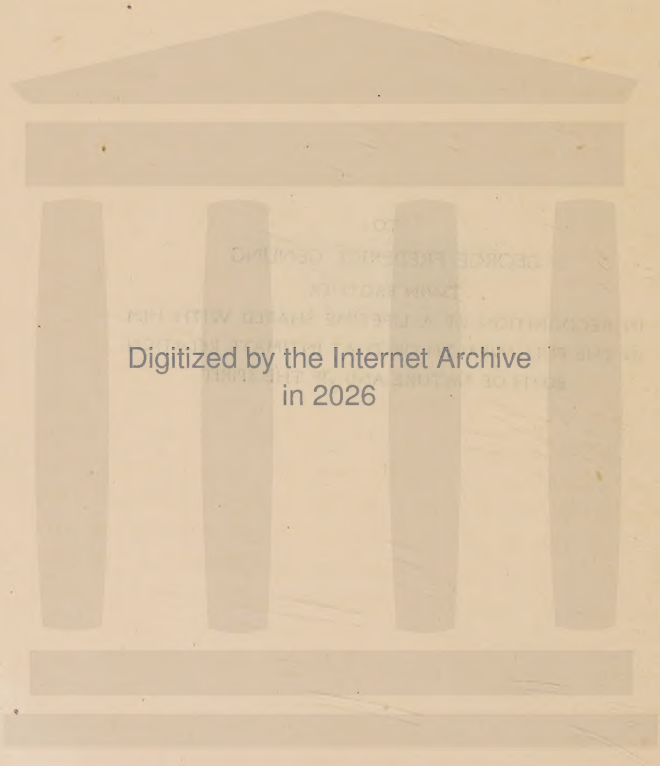
GEORGE FREDERICK GENUNG

TWIN BROTHER

IN RECOGNITION OF A LIFETIME SHARED WITH HIM

IN THE FULL WEALTH OF THAT INTIMATE RELATION

BOTH OF NATURE AND OF THE SPIRIT



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PREFACE

THIS book is meant to be just what its title names it: a guidebook to the Biblical literature, not a substitute for it. Its office is subsidiary, not principal. One does not study a guidebook for its own sake. The familiar little red-covered volumes that deck the traveled man's shelf bear witness not to erudition in that species of literature but to intimate memories and experiences wherein the useful manual that pointed out the scene of them is forgotten. So may it fare with the guidebook herewith introduced to the reader. The desired stimulus of it, if indeed it can lay any claim to such effect, is meant to be toward the straight study of the Bible itself, as one would study a virgin object of science, without deflection, without denial, without surrogate. Its postulate is that the Bible, reverently and constructively interrogated, is its own best interpreter. It bears the same relation, accordingly, to the wealth and width of the literature to which it would direct its readers that Murray and Baedeker bear to the lands and cities and treasures of their research; and its best hopes will be met if it succeeds, in some deserving measure, in placing them at the fair and free point of view whence, surveying with open eye the rich realm of the Biblical literature, they may see and know it as it essentially is.

In essaying, on the scale and scope here contemplated, to be a guide through so vast a tract of literary wealth, the author's most exacting problem has risen not from the difficulty or abstruseness of the subject but from its largeness, its sheer *embarras de richesses*. Here in a single volume is a book covering the life of many centuries which, as

Pascal phrases it, was not made by an individual author and dispensed among the people but which itself, as it emerged and grew, made the people; that is to say, which purveyed for a nation peculiarly gifted and responsive the spiritual light and truth that it needed for the right uses of life in its successive homes and ages and conditions. Immense treasures of matter and manner must needs be noted and weighed, whether reduced to the scale of this guidebook or not; there is also to be adjusted the ever-besetting tendency, figured in the old proverb, to miss the forest for the trees. No end of values are there for the gathering, each abundantly rewarding after its kind. He that seeketh findeth, and in so rich profusion that each department of research, once explored and organized, is prone to claim the monopoly and ignore or contemn the others. Hence the grim controversies that for centuries have so wrought to cleave the Bible truth into parcels and parties, — vehement screeds of doctor and saint, with their

> " great argument
> About it and about," —

controversies warrantable enough, perhaps, to myopic human nature, but generally reducible, for all their solemn sincerity, to some phase of smallness or one-sidedness. Yet, even so, they are not to be scorned; there are shreds of truth at the bottom of them; but neither are they to be emulated. The truth that is in them may be found, I am sure, in some more tolerant way, some way more consistent with comity of spirit and aim. But to find it one must ascend; must reach some point above, where the tangled lines meet and unite. The Biblical literature, after all, does make for plainness, simplicity, unity; it requires only that one shall find the master-key and consistently use it. This is why, as intimated above, I desiderate a fair and free point of view: fair, I mean, to all sides, all moods, all constituent factors,

free from subjective willfulness or torsion. I do not count myself to have attained. It would not be safe, I imagine, for anyone to do so. The quest is too high, too far-reaching. I can only avow the ideal, and keep it bright, and follow after. There comes to me often a remark of Matthew Arnold's, made for a similar though less exacting case of literary judgment. "To handle these matters properly," he says, "there is needed a poise so perfect that the least overweight in any direction tends to destroy the balance. Temper destroys it, a crotchet destroys it, even erudition may destroy it. To press to the sense of the thing itself with which one is dealing, not to go off on some collateral issue about the thing, is the hardest matter in the world." This may be rather extremely stated; but the scholar may well lay it up in mind as a self-regulative.

What my desired point of view specifically is, may perhaps be better felt, as giving tone and color to my whole treatment, than defined in categoric terms; for to call it literary is at once too broad and too narrow to be truly definitive. It is, to begin with, a station in thought and feeling where the disposition is less to criticize than to describe, less to analyze than to enjoy, less to sit in judgment than simply to inquire and learn. In other words, my attitude, if I know myself, is purely and humbly constructive. A book of this size and scale, I assume, cannot afford to waste time in exploring *culs-de-sac* or in recounting things that are not so. It is enough to have found these out; to make an academic demonstration of the discovery is another matter. Accordingly, I have been content to take the Scripture text as it is, in its latest and presumably most definitive edition, with more regard to the time it fits than to the time in which it was conjecturally written; content also to assume that the Biblical literature was the product not of vague tendencies and movements merely but of real personal authors who, whether one is able to call their names or not, were

what Professor Godet assumes of the Gospel writers, "men of good sense and good faith." This brings me to the most cherished center of my point of view. It has been my endeavor to place myself by the side of each Scripture author, as if his literary task were also mine; to learn his mind, share in his conception and aim, feel the intimate throb of his personal temperament and style. This for one factor of realization; there is also its inseparable complement to reckon with. An author implies an audience. We must needs appreciate their point of view, as well as that of their poets and teachers. Our quest accordingly must enlarge itself to take in the mind of a people or of an era which could respond intelligently, whether in sympathy or reaction, to the kind of literature under consideration; for a book is not a cloistered thing, it reflects, it is intimately involved with, its age. This is where the expository and the historical come into collaboration. In other words, with the study of the literature itself must be combined a study of the people whom the literature fits; and so our research must correspond in some degree to what the Germans call *Culturgeschichte*, a history of a people's culture, as this is reflected in the literary productions that have survived from the successive periods of its historical experience.

To the exactions of the point of view must be added the claims of balance, perspective, proportion; else there is the besetting liability, as phrased above, to leave the core of the thing itself for "some collateral issue about the thing." And, first of all, it is worth while to note, in the present stage of Biblical research, that it makes a good deal of difference whether one studies the literature for the sake of the history or the history for the sake of the literature. Both objects, of course, are legitimate and laudable; they connote, however, quite divergent interests and results, which ought to be fairly discriminated. I have pursued the latter because my taste leads me to lay the stress rather

on present spiritual values — which is to say the values that have made the literature Biblical — than on values which appeal predominantly to antiquarian interests. But the same emphasis which makes history the second interest and not the first also, when rightly distributed, puts into proper subordination the multitude of facts and guesses which are so apt to clamor for more than their due. Many a true thing may be insignificant, or only remotely relevant if at all. Especially on the size and scale of this book, such things may merit only casual mention, or indeed sink beneath the surface into silence. Accordingly, I have given comparatively little relative stress to some things that have bulked large in the higher criticism, things like documentary theories, editorial additions or glosses, conjectural sources, and the like; while I have almost entirely ignored the clatter and clutter of corrupt readings, scribal blunders, dislocations, discrepancies, and in general the pettinesses of destructive or sceptical criticism, — things which do not belong to the scale and scope of this book, and which, when projected on the background of the large Biblical theme, can elicit only the doubtful query, "Well, what of it?" When the final claims of Biblical values are made up, many things that are first shall be last; it will do no harm to weigh and discount that possibility, or in other words to sense the proportions and relations of things.

All this, however, brings us only as far as the outworks of our real quest; the heart of the matter begins here, and no teacher or guidebook can impart it. It is a fallacy to assume, whatever we think of inspiration, that we are dealing with a literature like every other; we miss a cardinal factor if we do, and our study is sterilized thereby. This is a literature unique. It holds perpetual commerce with the unseen and the divine, while also its feet are firmly on the earth moving among men's intimate affairs. It is Biblical. It is a thing to be learned, as it were, by heart rather than by

rote. And the heart has its own means of recognition. Contemplating the majestic evolution and coördination of the Biblical theme until in one unitary body of literature it has recorded a universe of experiences and relations wherein the divine and the human natures meet and blend, the sincere heart is aware of what Virgil felt in the universe of nature: —

> "Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
> Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet; —"

or to use Burke's noble paraphrase: "the spirit . . . which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part, . . . even down to the minutest member." That is our true, our only adequate objective — the spirit within. I do not insist on a theological or mystical name for it; that is for the reader's experience to verify. One gets the spirit of a book not by logic or memory but by a kindred response to its inherent appeal. So with this Biblical literature. The Open Sesame is not merely the academic or dogmatic or even pietistic spirit, but the strong pervasive spirit of the Book itself. With this as the inner key the Book is its own best interpreter; and the reflex of that spirit, in fitting proportion and degree, is the best illuminant of the collateral and ancillary issues that are involved with it.

The version of the Bible used as the source of quotation and reference throughout this guidebook, except in some specified cases, is the American Standard Revision of 1901.

JOHN FRANKLIN GENUNG

AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

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A GUIDEBOOK TO THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

For worthy deeds are not often destitute of worthy relaters, as by a certain Fate great Acts and great Eloquence have most commonly gone hand in hand, equalling and honoring each other in the same Ages. — MILTON

These people have a secret; . . . they have discerned the way the world was going, and therefore they have prevailed. — MATTHEW ARNOLD

A GUIDEBOOK TO THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

AFTER a lifelong conversance with literature, in which field he did the world great service and nobly wore himself out, Sir Walter Scott, in his last illness, requested his son-in-law Lockhart to read to him. When asked from what book, he replied, "Need you ask? There is but one." And Lockhart read to him from the Bible.

This tribute of a modern author to the venerable volume was not his alone. Nor did it express, as some would read it, either a sudden vivid conviction or a sick man's sense of last resort. It was the world's tribute, rendered long ago and reënforced by ages of ripened experience; expressing the general judgment that here, of all books, is the one supremely great, the one that none others can supplant or emulate, the one embodying the essential values of all the rest. This idea is implicit in the name that soon after its completion was given to it: The Bible, — not a specific title at all, for it means simply The Book. The epithet Holy, which was quite generally added to the name, is of the same implication, expressing as it does its separateness from and superiority to all other books.

What's in the Name

The term The Bible, from the Greek *ta biblia*, meaning originally "the booklets," or "little books" (more strictly "little papers," for *biblos* was the Greek word for papyrus), recognizes the volume before us as a body of literature distributed in a collection of smaller works;

which it obviously is. These works, however, though diverse, are not fortuitous or miscellaneous but of a selected and classified character; wherefore the volume, as now made up, is often spoken of as a sacred canon or library. The name "bible" was not given to the collection until the selecting and amassing of the booklets, in both Old and New Testaments, was virtually or quite complete; and soon thereafter the word, originally a plural, was understood and construed as a singular. Thus out of the sense of diversity grew the sense of unity and comprehensiveness. The name crystallizes the book's history. Beginning with the most unpretending claims, making its way by its intrinsic worth, not compelling assent but winning it, the Bible has established itself by its broad and varied scope, its homogeneity, and its developed unity of theme, as the world's supreme classic.

In such comprehensive scope it calls for appraisal to-day. The Bible is at once, and in equally true sense of all three distinctions: a literature, a library, and a book.

NOTE. *Its Designations.* It was about the middle of the second century A.D. that the name "Bible" was generally adopted; and the word seems to have changed from plural to singular in its transition from Greek to Latin. The name given in the Bible itself to the collection of sacred writings (comprising the Old Testament series) is *s'pharim*, books; see for instance, Dan. ix, 2: "I, Daniel, understood by the books," among which he specifies the prophecy of Jeremiah. The New Testament writers speak of the Old Testament books as *hai graphai*, the writings (Latin *scripturæ*); see, for instance, Acts xvii, 11: "examining the scriptures (*tas graphas*) daily," where the body of Old Testament literature is meant.

I

The Bible as a Literature. As a gradually accumulated deposit of literary works the Bible coincides, in time and in progress of ideas, with the national history of a people of Semitic origin inhabiting the small land of Palestine, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, and called at successive

stages of their history Hebrews, Israelites, and Jews. During this race's unique national experience this literature, as put into form by its poets, sages, historians, and prophets, embodied its sanest thinking and far-reaching ideals; was in fact the education and making of that peculiarly gifted people.

The basis of this literature, its underlying tissue, is historic and prophetic. That is to say, nearly all the works preserved to us are pretty directly concerned with this people's national experience; not indeed in the mere annalistic or political sense, but as discerning its inner meanings, as related to the elemental claims of God and duty and destiny. This it is which gives the literature its hold on succeeding times and peoples; for of all ancient races the Hebrew race was preëminent for the depth, the clearness, and the intensity of its spiritual intuitions. Its numerous writers, whoever they were, had in large and like degree the poet's and prophet's endowment of

> such large discourse,
> Looking before and after;

and this was their undying gift to humanity.

In its Historic Setting

The literature surviving to us in the Bible covers, in its composition, a period from about 1250 B.C.[1] to about 100 A.D. In its literary development this long period falls naturally into three stages, which in our present study are considered in three books.

NOTE. *The Starting Point.* This period of about 1350 years is reckoned from the Song of Deborah, Judges v, perhaps the earliest literary piece which as a whole can be taken as contemporaneous with its event, to the completion of the Gospels, which may be put at about 100 A.D. The Song of Miriam at the Red Sea, Exod. xv, is in part as old as its event, and there are other early fragments which will be noted in their place; but the Song of Deborah makes a convenient starting point alike in history and in literature, from which we can reckon both backwards and forwards.

[1] For the dates in Old Testament chronology I follow mostly those given in Kautszch's "Literature of the Old Testament."

1. Its earliest works, which we read as quoted bits of song and parable more or less fragmentary, embedded in its later compiled history, date from a time when the Hebrew people, newly delivered from Egyptian bondage, were struggling for foothold and independence in the land of Canaan. With the organization of the monarchy under David and Solomon a corresponding literary impulse was awakened, which, increasing in breadth, diffusion, and conscious art, followed the fortunes of the state through the rise and decline of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, determined the various lines of literary utterance and form, and reached the vigor of its formative period at about the time of the Chaldean exile, in the beginning of the sixth century before Christ. It is during this period that the literature interacts most intimately with the history of the nation. We have named this period "The Formative Centuries."

2. Through the subsequent centuries of life under foreign dominance, until the coming of Christ, during which period the national interest subsisted largely on the glories of its past, the activities of men of letters were directed to compiling, revising, and completing the works which the pre-exilic period had as it were left in the rough; molding them into more matured and self-conscious literary forms; and coördinating them into a canon for educational and devotional uses. In this period the prophet and creative historian is succeeded by the scholar and scribe. Its literary evolution is traced under the name "The People of a Book"; the book in question being the Old Testament, as a collection of laws, prophecies, histories, poems, and didactic precepts.

3. With the Old Testament, the Jewish canon, the Biblical literature of a race is closed, but it contains many intimations of unfinality and presages of a larger consummation. The new era opens, seventy years before the break-up of the Jewish state, with the coming of Jesus. Then later, under

the vitalizing power of his ministry and personality, a new literature gradually rises, related to the old as fulfillment to promise, as realization to hope and symbol; a literature which from Jewish and ethnical becomes Christian and universal. Thus out of the literature of a race is developed the literature of humanity, which all races and ages can appropriate. The latest works of this new type of utterance date from about a generation after the destruction of Jerusalem and the downfall of the Jewish state, which event occurred A.D. 70. We consider this period under the name "The People of the Way."

At every stage, until the coming of Jesus, the Biblical literature is closely inwoven with national and race affairs; a running accompaniment of Hebrew history, especially of its wider and more imaginative stage called Israelite, enforcing its spiritual values for present and future. After Jesus' coming it ignores the affairs of state, being concerned with the facts and values of the new order which, through his ministry and the activities of his apostles, is gaining foothold and power in the larger world. The ideas of this new Christian order it not only sets forth in their own intrinsic light but coördinates at every step with the values that the past through its history and culture has revealed.

In its Touch with Nations and Times

The fact that this body of literature has so laid hold on the universal heart of man as to have become the Bible, the revered book of counsel and authority for the most enlightened nations of the world, and to have been, as it still is, a main factor of their greatness, rouses inquiry as to what causes could have been great enough to produce so immense an effect. The thought of the factors concerned in it — land, history, people — yields at first consideration only a sense of discrepancy. It was a small and sequestered land, a dim and out-of-the-way history, a people quite undistinguished for arts or learning, and never great in conquest or statecraft. To explain the

power of their literature much has been made, and rightly, of divine superintendence and inspiration. But the divine accommodates itself to human methods and means, and these we can measure. And if these in themselves do not suffice to fill out the solution, we can at least note what part they play and what points they reach in the problem.

To gauge so tremendous an effect, however, we must take in a somewhat commensurate scope of historic and spiritual forces. The Biblical literature was secreted from many centuries of time, and interacted with the most spacious human issues. Its power to naturalize itself among all peoples and ages was well and truly earned. How this was, let a few words of summary attempt to show.

The land from which we get the Bible was indeed small; "the least of all lands" it has been called; but being just at the meeting-place of three continents, and traversed by the main international routes of travel, traffic, and war, it was for the play of historic forces focal and pivotal. No other ancient land was so favorably situated to be the laboratory for the working out of a world purpose.[1] The period covered by the literature may be described in the large as that millennium of antiquity which witnessed the evolution of a world order out of primitive chaos and anarchy. It was that momentous era during which, as in a huge melting-pot, multitudes of turbulent tribes with their warring gods and confused religions were first gradually subdued in the rude unity of great unwieldy monarchies, — Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, — and eventually, through the organizing genius of the Romans, amalgamated in a world-wide merger of empire. It was, in other words, the embryotic

[1] "Palestine was, in a very real sense, the physical centre of those movements of history from which the modern world has grown." — W. R. Smith, "Prophets of the Old Testament," p. 338. "The Jewish and Christian Scriptures had their origin . . . at the meeting-place of the great tides of human thought, the centuries-long interchange of experience and ideas." — Geden, "Introduction to the Hebrew Bible," p. 353.

period in the birth of a general human civilization. The same period, in its fitting time, witnessed the rise and diffusion of Greek arts and culture, the spread of commerce, and the opening comity of racial intercourse. Thus all around this little land of Palestine, as well as within it, a field was being prepared and spiritual forces were concentrating themselves as if toward the fulfillment of some vast design.

And there at the center of things, involved with the rest, dwelt a peculiarly gifted people, who as monarchy succeeded monarchy came successively into intimate relations with them all; not indeed as a conquering or favored people, but rather as tributary and despised, yet distinguished from others by the intrinsic superiority of their spiritual insight and their educated conscience. This set them apart by themselves, as had indeed been prophesied of them, —

> Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone,
> And shall not be reckoned among the nations (Num. xxiii, 9), —

and yet by that higher spiritual endowment gave them function and mission as a central repository of religious light and moral law for the guidance of all nations. Of this distinction their foremost prophets became aware and deduced its ideal before their captivity and dispersion;[1] the ideal became real only through the consummation afforded by the greatest personage of their history, Jesus Christ.

As a nation planted in the midst among other and more powerful ones, and later as a people dispersed abroad and tributary at home, the Israelites were exposed successively to the influence of all the great civilizations of the ancient world; meeting each, too, just when its power was in its prime. This contact doubtless did much to enlarge and liberalize their own religious culture; made them to a degree receptive of ideas on which they and other nations

[1] Cf. Isa. ii, 2–4.

could occupy common ground. It is to be observed, however, that most of this exposure to the larger world came when the Hebrew religious idea was well matured; at the height of the formative centuries, when the nation could measure its spiritual stamina with that of its conquerors. Here its loyalty to race and sound tradition prevailed. It made the people's attitude reactive and self-reliant; kept them from being merged with others; gave sharpness and contour to the ideas which they had inherited from their fathers. They had greater literary values to give than to receive. And the fact of survival, intact and purified, while the chaotic cults and creeds of other nations went under, proves the master power that the Hebrew literature possessed. It was like the clearness and reasonableness and sanity after which the confused myths and rites of other nations had been groping. Such was the foundation that the Old Testament literature laid for the later Christian structure represented in the literature of the New Testament. It was the vehicle of a spiritual force which had emerged from the dimness of prehistoric times; which had gathered head through generations of educative and prophetic leading; until, when its mission was ripe, it was ready to precipitate its power into the mind of the world. Thus it fitted, as by a divine wisdom and purpose, into the providentially ordered movements of world history.

In its Literary Quality

The sacredness with which the Bible has been invested, owing to the conviction that it is an inspired revelation from God, has in time past had the effect of removing it from common handling and putting it in a class by itself. No other book has had such usage as has befallen it. It has been approached with trembling caution as if it were a "live wire"; has been believed indiscriminately, as if its every statement were an oracle; has been used for divination, like the *sortes Virgilianæ*; has been forced upon men arbitrarily, as a book of despotic dogma;

has been made the court of final appeal not only in matters of faith and character but in history and natural science. All this makes it harder to approach the Bible in the candid good faith which we accord to other books. But its original utterances were never so intended. It is not esoteric. It does not deal in mysteries and enigmas. It invites candor and verification. It uses the speech of common men, and moves in the everyday relations of life. It appeals, like all other books, to the verdict of reason and sound intuition. In a word, it is a literature, with all the marks and moods of human literature. As a human literature it uses the means and methods of literary art; it is subject also to human varieties and limitations of knowledge and insight and skill. As the representative literature of a race, too, it has a tone and temperament of its own, the reflection of that race's mind and heart.

It is only in comparatively recent years that the Bible has been studied frankly as a literature, or associated with such traits of style and invention as are recognized in other books. It has been taken as a book all on one level of style, and all expressed in a solemn austere tone suitable only to occasions of worship. And even the attention that has thus far been given to its literary character has largely followed "the direction which modern study so often takes, of putting inquiry into origins above everything, and neglecting the consideration of the work as work."[1] Such inquiry is only one element of research, and that only subsidiary and external.

As we treat the Bible like other books, however, and get into the spirit and purpose of it, we find that instead of being in uniform style throughout, it has all the freedom and variety that characterizes other literature. There are in it all the personal elements which make literature human and vital. We find here the lyric intensity of poetry, the

[1] Quoted from Saintsbury, "The English Novel," p. 24.

impassioned appeal of public address, the compact phrasing of aphorism, the limpid flow of narrative, the easy familiarity of conversation and epistle; all fitted like speech to author, audience, and occasion. It rests throughout on a basis of history and matter of fact; it contains also works of fiction, allegory, and parable. Some of its truths are expressed in severely literal terms; others are figurative and symbolic, or molded in the imagery of prophetic vision. Many moods and tastes are represented, as befits the range of subjects and the personality of writers.

The general style is indeed that of the fervid Oriental mind, which in its intensity and imaginative color differs from our cooler approach to things; but this very style, as the vehicle of its lofty subject matter, has shown a wonderful power to naturalize itself among modern nations. It has proved a truly creative idiom. This is seen, for instance, in the tremendous debt which the German and English languages owe to their translations of the Bible. Our English speech and literature are permeated with Biblical terms, figures, and phraseology, which, apart from as well as intimately associated with our religious ideals, have given a distinctive tone and fiber to our most sterling literary style.

II

The Bible as a Library. We are dealing indeed with a long-developed literature, a deposit from the literary mind and art of centuries. But it is not a casual or miscellaneous accumulation. It is a literature winnowed, tested, classified, a series of books on which scholars and critics have worked, in conformity with the creative idea at the root of the race's life. Its various books are arranged and correlated in one consistent trend and spirit. Hence the name here given to the collection: a library, or, to use the more formal term, a canon. The scripture canon is the selected and

edited body of works which as a collection make for a certain principle and purpose.

The gathering and arranging of these works into a library, which for the Old Testament was done after the Jews' return from exile, was the first step in the recognition of their essential unity of relation. As time went on this canon came to be regarded as a cycle, complete in its line and closed to further additions; a library of the nation's classics, deemed standard and authoritative. After the literature had advanced, however, from Jewish interpretations to Christian, the collection was reopened, and a new canon, that of the New Testament, was added; which in its turn became in like manner settled and closed to further additions.

NOTE. *The Term "Canon."* The word "canon," from the Greek *kanōn*, meaning a reed, that is, a measuring reed, refers to the test or proof to which the books were subjected in order to be judged worthy of a place and rank in the sacred library. What this standard was is obscure; but we feel its influence in the character of the works chosen, in the absence of irrelevant material, and in the difference from works still extant which were denied a place in the canon. As one contemplates the final result, so seemingly fortuitous yet so rounded and finished, one gets the same sense as from the composition of the works themselves: that there was a divine superintendence and control of the process, and that "the builders builded better than they knew."

The Spoken and the Written

In tracing the literature from its beginnings, we have to go back beyond the age of written works and think of a long pre-literary period during which ideas were conveyed orally, in the primitive forms of song, folk tale, parable, and proverb. It was such spontaneous utterance as passes by word of mouth from father to son, from teacher to pupil, from the man gifted in speech or poetic feeling to the common hearer; and it took the plain wording and phrase adapted to quick understanding and easy retention in memory. For publication and dissemination it depended on oral tradition; and the people's mind developed an aptitude to retain it in as exact and

stereotyped form as if it were written down. So it seems to have been until near the close of the formative period; and by that time the type of literary utterance was well fixed. It was simple, large, natural; it was strong and vital; it was direct and personal; it laid the foundation of the Biblical literary style. Thus oral transmission, the word spoken or chanted, became the popular unit of literary utterance, which the later self-consciousness of the man of letters could not avail to make academic and artificial.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that those pre-literary times had no written works. There are evidences that they had. There are inscriptions and letters still in existence which are much older than the Hebrew nation. Things were written down, however, not for popular reading (for ages passed before the Hebrews became a reading people), but for safe-keeping and permanence; such things as laws, statutes, oracles, archives, — not literature but as it were the bones of literature; and if read at all were read *to* the people, not *by* them. This motive of safe-keeping and permanence, always strong, became dominant as the people became increasingly conscious of their national idea and hope. It led them indeed to attach a greater value to the written word than to the spoken, to the book than to the voice. From the beginning of their national life the Hebrews had an extraordinary regard for anything in written form. There was something fixed and final about it; it was to them the symbol of truth expressed not in a fluid and tentative way but with the conclusiveness of finished thought; and the prophet or scribe who could wield the pen was revered as a man of unique distinction.

NOTE. *Primitive Written Records.* When the Hebrews had their national beginnings in the wilderness and Canaan, the greater nations around them already had a large body of annals, laws, and religious poems, permanently engraved on stone. The code of Hammurabi, which contains many laws similar to the later laws of Moses, had been in

existence in some temple of Babylonia since the time of Abraham. The ten "words," or commandments, of Moses were engraved on two tablets of stone (Exod. xxxiv, 28), and laid away in the ark (Deut. x, 3–5) where more than three centuries later they still were (1 Kings viii, 9). Isaiah is directed to write important oracles on tablets for a sign of truth (Isa. viii, 1, 16) and permanence (xxx, 8). The same feeling of the finality of a written record, and longing for it, is expressed in connection with the celebrated Redeemer passage in the Book of Job (Job xix, 23, 24):—

> Oh that my words were now written!
> Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
> That with an iron pen and lead
> They were graven in the rock forever!

This sentiment of extraordinary reverence for the book doubtless rose from the sense of what a serious matter writing was in primitive times. When its material was tablets of stone or clay, on which the words were laboriously incised, the subject matter would naturally be condensed to the briefest and weightiest records, and be confined to subjects of public and impersonal interest. With the use of parchment, however, and the invention of alphabetic writing, facility of writing was greatly increased, and with it a corresponding facility of the written idea. With the diminished labor and more tractable material writing could acquire more of the freedom and flow of speech, could more easily amplify and enrich the expression, could go on to greater range and fullness of treatment. All this was like an approach of the written to the spoken. At the same time, with the refinement of literary taste and art, the value of the works hitherto floating about in oral tradition, and their worthiness to be perpetuated in a more permanent way, would be increasingly recognized; while the oral composition itself, the poem or prophecy, was with advancing culture making approach to the carefulness and restraint of the written word. The great formative period of the literature, corresponding roughly to Israel's independence and autonomy as a state, is virtually a long transition

from literature of the purely oral type to literature of the written; to a form in which every variety of sentiment could be expressed at once with the vigor and limpidness of speech and the artistic depth and complexity of studied writing. Its beginning is marked by the remains of song, oracle, and folk tale which we find embedded in the historical books; its culmination, around the time of the Chaldean exile, by such great creative works as the Vision of Isaiah, the Book of Deuteronomy, and the Book of Job.

NOTE. *The Interrelation of Speech and Writing.* Some remarks of Cardinal Newman, in "Idea of a University," p. 272, distinguish in a lucid way the motive underlying these two elements in literature. "Literature," he says, "from the derivation of the word, implies writing, not speaking; this, however, arises from the circumstance of the copiousness, variety, and public circulation of the matters of which it consists. What is spoken cannot outrun the range of the speaker's voice, and perishes in the uttering. When words are in demand to express a long course of thought, when they have to be conveyed to the ends of the earth, or perpetuated for the benefit of posterity, they must be written down, that is, reduced to the shape of literature." He goes on to say, however, that its unit, its basis, is the spoken word, with its connotation of personality, making literature not a mechanical thing but essentially "the personal use or exercise of language." It is this intensely personal element which makes the Biblical literature vital.

The Movement to Collect

As long as the Israelite state remained intact, the prophets and men of letters had relatively little occasion to collect and classify the stores of literature that had accumulated through the centuries of their national life. Their regards were centered rather in maintaining the welfare of the people and the integrity of the government in its current and prospective needs; and for this a vigorous literary activity was ready, as the occasions for it rose. The spirit of the literature, as manifested most strongly in the literary prophets, was creative, originative, concerned with the immediate problems of the nation's life and destiny.

When, however, the nation's political hopes failed, and by two exiles, the Assyrian (722 B.C.) and the Chaldean (597 and 586 B.C.), the people found themselves a hopelessly scattered and subject race, the regards of the nation's men of letters were turned in a new direction. They were still united, and more than ever, in the great religious and moral ideas that had given them a spiritual superiority to other races; and whether dispersed over the earth or returned from exile in their home, they felt the exceeding value of the store of literature in which those ideas had been evolved. The works of their heroic past became classic; the great events and personalities of their history acquired a distinction which had not been realized while their history was being made. Accordingly the prophetic spirit, which had been concerned with issues of present and future, gradually subsided, and succeeding writers worked rather in the spirit of the scribe and the scholar, concerned with preserving the works inherited from the past and with making them educative for the changed conditions of the national life.

This movement to give the ancient literature a new lease of life had two phases, which we may call an editorial and a selective; both characteristic of a literary mood which from spontaneous and adventurous had become self-conscious and critical.

Already, a century or more before the Exile, the editorial mood, the movement to revise, round out, and complete the older literary works, was well under way. These works existed in more or less scattered and inchoate form; some of them were composed for conditions too primitive to suit later needs; many of them had to be reduced from oral tradition to written form. To bring these archaic remains up to date, making them available for more modern uses, was a natural impulse of the matured literary sense. Old stories of patriarchs and judges, kings and prophets, were gathered

and coördinated into a continuous history; ancient laws were put into popular form and modernized; hymns for public worship were adapted to new religious or historical situations; maxims and aphorisms of the sages were collected and compiled. Thus the older literature was not only gathered from its scattered depositories; it was also kept renewed and moving by appreciative editorial work.

NOTE. *Preëxilic Evidences of this Editorial Work.* All the early historic books, from Genesis to 2 Samuel, are composite, the work of editorial compilers who availed themselves of the ancient literary materials of various ages, incorporating much that was unchanged, but adding connecting links, summaries, notes of explanation, and the like; and most of this literature was so nearly complete that only the scholarly activity of the Exile, culminating in Ezra the scribe, was needed to finish it. The Book of Deuteronomy was probably edited from a "book of the law" found in the Temple in 622 B.C. (see 2 Kings xxii). The section of the Book of Proverbs from chapter xxv to xxix is said to have been compiled by "the men of Hezekiah King of Judah" (727–699; see Prov. xxv, 1). These are only salient examples of what must have been a vigorous literary occupation.

After the return from exile, during the four centuries preceding the coming of Jesus, while the attitude of the Jews toward other races and creeds became more intolerant and exclusive, the literary mood became more critical and selective, the activities of the scribes being directed to determining what works should find a place in their canon, and to classifying them according to their subject matter and form. Into the history of this movement we cannot enter here. Its motive is apparent. The people of the widely dispersed race must be kept true to their inherited ideas, not only at home in Palestine where the Temple and priesthood were, but throughout the lands of their dispersion where their synagogues were the local centers of communal life, education, and worship; and this selected library must be the uniting and integrating factor. Besides this, maintaining so loyally as they everywhere did their racial

individuality, they must make their idea good against the invasion of other customs and literatures and prove their own worthiness to survive. To this end, out of the rich stores of their venerable literature they must select and coördinate what was worthy to become classic and reject what was below or aside from the standard. Thus in course of time the canon formed itself out of the books that were deemed to have a fitting function in the nation's library. Before the time of Christ this canon had not only been determined, as to range and order, but translated into Greek, which had become the cultural language of the world; and it was the Greek version (the so-called Septuagint) which was used and supplemented by the writers of the New Testament canon.

NOTES. 1. *The Original Order of the Old Testament Canon.* As originally arranged the Hebrew canon, covering our Old Testament, has a somewhat different order from what we have in our Bible. It falls into three great divisions, which represent three stages of selection and compilation, and which were named respectively the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings or Scriptures. The following is a brief tabulation of them:

(1) *The Law*, sometimes called the five fifths of the law, Greek Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

(2) *The Prophets*, namely, (*a*) Earlier Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel (two books in one), Kings (also undivided); (*b*) Later Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve (all the minor prophets being comprehended in one book).

(3) *The Writings*, Greek Hagiographa, namely, (*a*) the anthologies: Psalms, Proverbs, Job; (*b*) the Megilloth, or Rolls: Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; (*c*) Unclassified: Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

In the preface to the apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus (130 B.C.) these divisions are referred to as "the law, and the prophets, and the other books of our fathers." In Luke xxiv, 44, Jesus speaks of these as "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms," designating the third division by its first book.

2. *The Supplementary (New Testament) Canon.* The Old Testament canon, which was made up for uses of the Jewish religion and

retained by the Jews, was adopted from the beginning by the Christian church, which indeed began as a Jewish sect. The New Testament canon, which in the course of two centuries was made up for Christian uses, supplements the former by adding the fulfillment and completion to which the old looks forward. Like the older canon, it puts its historical part, consisting of the four gospels and the Acts, first; but the second part, consisting of epistolary works from St. Paul and others, was written earlier than the completed gospels. In our study of Biblical literature the two canons are treated as harmonious with each other and in a way continuous; for our purposes indeed the two are one library, making the whole Bible a unitary cycle of literature.

Two important results of this development from a miscellaneous literature to a coördinated library or canon are to be noted and borne in mind as we study.

Results of this Library Selection

1. Much of the literature we have in a revised form, adapted to conditions later than those of the first composition. The revisions were indeed made conscientiously and with remarkable skill and sympathy; but sometimes differing versions of the same event may be interwoven, or introduced side by side without attempt to reduce discrepancies. Customs and ideas which have grown obsolete may be interpreted by standards of the later time when the final account was given. Primitive elements may exist among the more matured and refined. In other words, the Bible literature, owing to the conditions in which it was developed, is very largely a composite literature, containing elements of varying age and mintage. This fact increases the difficulty of historic verification; but it does not impair, it enhances rather, the spiritual and literary value of the whole, because the editorial work has softened the crudities of style and presented the truth of the theme in a more finished and uniform edition.

2. The various books and their component parts were written in one order, an order following in the large the historical experience of the nation. As an arranged library, however, they are to be read and estimated in another order,

an order rather of dependence than of chronology. The books of earliest theme, like Genesis, were not the earliest written; and they contain evidences of a more advanced and matured thinking than do some other books, like for instance Judges. Leviticus contains a later development of law than Deuteronomy. The prophets, which in the canon come after the historical books, have to be fitted into the history by internal evidence; and generally they come before the Mosaic law is completed, though the latter is in Hebrew estimation the first division of the Bible, both in time and importance.

The noting of such historical connections as these has in the last half century revolutionized and greatly illuminated Biblical research; it is in fact the main business of what is called the Higher Criticism. It is to be valued not blindly nor exclusively, but for what it is worth. The study of the Bible in its canonical order has its advantages too; and the present and eternal values do not depend on our knowledge of ancient history.

III

The Bible as a Book. The editorial and selective movement by which a race's literature was winnowed and reduced to a classified library was but a stage in a movement greater still, whose full significance could not well come to light until the culminating stage was reached, to complete and round out the whole.

This culminating stage of the Biblical literature is comprised in the New Testament. With this body of writings to draw the meanings of things into unity and coördination, it is seen that the Bible resolves itself into a single book. It has the authentic traits of an organic and homogeneous individual work of literature. Like any well-planned book it has one inclusive plot or theme; it has a single purpose,

a correlation of parts, a consistently developed movement, a fitting dénouement; it has a unitary ideal, to which its whole scheme of character, object, and event is related. Thus it has earned its unique title: The Book.

What all this book movement is, in outline, will appear as we trace the story of a literature some thirteen hundred years in the making. Its beginnings emerge from dim prehistoric times whose conditions can be traced only by spiritual insight. It is closely interwoven with the progress of a nation's history; and yet its truth is larger than historical events can compass or explain. It is enmeshed with the thoughts and motives of human nature from manhood's primitive elements; and yet by a steady prophetic pulsation it sweeps onward beyond the natural course of human tendency until the human blends with the divine. By reason of this spiritual movement and high culmination it is that this book, so many ages in the making, bears emphatic marks of one superintending Mind, one organic purpose. It is impossible to account for all that the Book is without holding it to be as truly the word of God as the composition of man.

Without attempting to measure the divine factor in this movement, however, we may here note two cardinal elements, reciprocally related to each other, which work together to make the Bible a unitary book.

Rationale of the Biblical Movement

The first is, that throughout the Old Testament range of utterance its authors had, in varying degrees as occasion called, a prophetic intuition and conviction of their people's duty and destiny, and shaped their literary work accordingly. The Old Testament is a forward-looking book. It is imbued with the idea that the unique history it records is history working to an end. Of the racial traits that come to light in it, none is more constant than what has been called "the habitual expectancy of the Semitic mind";[1]

[1] G. A. Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," Vol. I, p. 15.

and of all the strains of literary utterance represented the most vital and potent is the prophetic.

The second element is, that as the Personage whose words and ministry are the soul of the New Testament was imbued with the dynamic spirit of this prophetic literature, he set himself consciously and determinately to translate its ideals into terms of human life. He made it his vocation to interpret, to correct, and to fulfill what the men of truest intuition in the ages before had dimly foreseen ought to be. The life of Jesus and the literature that gathered round and derived from it are as truly expressed in terms of completion and fulfillment as the Old Testament is in terms of promise and expectation.

Thus, with these two factors prophecy and fulfillment answering in their order to each other, the Bible may be regarded as essentially the story (may we not call it the epic?) of the spiritual development of manhood, as this is revealed through the experiences of a nation specially endowed to this end, and as it culminates in a supreme Personality in whom is revealed the Son of Man, which is to say the complete adult manhood. If we seek for the supreme interpreter of Biblical history and thought, the one without whom it would be a plot without a consummation, this is he. This is how the later Biblical writers read the course of the vast action, as its end and purpose lay unrolled before them. To this end all who wrought at the sublime literary structure — prophets, historians, evangelists, apostles — builded better than they knew, for an unseen Wisdom and Spirit wrought with them. And so as their work began with the vision of the primal spirit of man issuing raw and untried from the Creator's hand, it ended, after the "dim and perilous way" of his spiritual education and growth had been traversed, with the vision, still going on to realization, of "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," which is St. Paul's definition of "a full-grown

man." No theme can be greater; no plot more masterly and comprehensive; no solution of the vast problem so simple and true. Need you ask what is the Book of Life? There is but one. All the rest are but broken fragments or pale reflections of its undying truth.

BOOK I

THE FORMATIVE CENTURIES

There is a great difference between a book which is written by a particular individual and is dispensed by him among the people, and a book which makes a people itself. One cannot doubt that the book is as old as the people. — PASCAL, Thoughts

THE FORMATIVE CENTURIES

THE seven centuries during which the literature of the Hebrew people was gradually unfolding from elemental to rounded form and content correspond roughly to the period of their independent existence as a state. The great epoch to which their prophets and historians looked back as a beginning was that of their deliverance, as unorganized tribes and families, from a life of bondage in Egypt, about 1320 years before Christ. The influence of that event colored all their songs and stories with the sense of intimate dependence on their deliverer Jehovah, and with the presage of a high destiny and purpose. This continued, its meanings wrought out with increasing clearness and force, through a turbulent period of tribal anarchy under the Judges, in which days "there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. xvii, 6; xviii, 1; xix, 1; xxi, 25); through the organization of a kingdom under Saul, and its vigorous unity under David and Solomon; through the varied fortunes of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, with their exposure to contentions within and invasions military and religious from without; until the time was ripe for the people to undergo a momentous ordeal, the ordeal of deportation and exile and dispersion. At the time of this event, that of the Chaldean captivity from 586 to 538 B.C., the Israelite people had in possession a noble store of literature, accessible to all classes, from which they could derive hope and guidance for the unknown experiences yet to come. All the period thus covered was, as regards their racial and religious idea, a germinal and preparatory period; which therefore we may call the Formative Centuries.

These centuries were formative as well for the nation as for the literature. Beginning with a primitive aggregation of tribes and clans, so untrained to organization that a whole generation of wilderness education has to be undergone before they are fit to colonize their allotted land, their corporate life has to grow through various advancing stages of civilization, — nomadic, pastoral, agricultural, — before they reach the organized and urban state in which they can be fully aware of their national idea and principle, and of their religious trend. They are finding themselves, pupils as it were, in the school of Jehovah. And during these centuries their peculiar formative idea must make itself good in the face of peoples stronger and more civilized than they, proving thus its fitness to survive and overcome. It must by varied experience and discovery prove its intrinsic fitness to be the law of sterling manhood, among the speculations and idolatries and superstitions of the earth.

CHAPTER I

SEMINA LITTERARUM

[Till the end of the reign of David, cir. 970 B.C.]

OF A PEOPLE whose unique mission it was to bring forth a Bible for the most enlightened races of the world we need to know more than is implied in a census of extant literary production. We need to know something of its native fitness for this mission; of its endowments of mind, temperament, character; of its distinctive gifts of insight and expression; and of that more comprehensive spiritual energy which we may name its genius. It is among such elements as these that we are to trace the vital germs of its literature, the Semina Litterarum.

I. The Hebrew Mind

The Bible is essentially a Hebrew book. It bears throughout the characteristic impress of the Hebrew mind. The Old Testament was written mostly in the Hebrew language; and the different ages in which its various works were composed represent the language from its time of classical purity, when it was the people's vernacular, to the time when it was becoming a book language, and its place as a people's tongue was being taken by the closely allied Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek, and availed itself, especially in the more doctrinal portions, of Greek ways of thinking, at a time when the Greek mind was dominant in the culture and philosophy of the world. The New Testament writers read their Old Testament, too, in a Greek version.

This transition from Hebrew to Greek, however, while it enlarged and enriched the thinking of the later writers, did not determine it. The Hebrew genius prevails throughout: its peculiar racial coloring; its inherited ideas of life; its fidelity to conscience and morals; its religious interpretations of history and experience; its prophetic sense of manhood's mission and destiny. This is as true of the New Testament as of the Old; for the New Testament is but the perpetuation and maturing of ideals that had long germinated in Hebrew minds. As our Lord Jesus himself said to the woman of Samaria, "Salvation"—that is, the health of manhood—"is of the Jews" (John iv, 22). And the germinal principles of this were determined from the beginning of their history.

NOTES. 1. *The Language of the Old Testament.* "All the Old Testament books are written in Hebrew, with the exception of parts of Daniel and Ezra, namely, Dan. ii, 4–vii, 28; Ezra iv, 8–vi, 18, vii, 12–26, which are in Aramaic, a language closely allied to the Hebrew and at least as old. There is also a single Aramaic verse in the Book of Jeremiah, where it appears suddenly and perplexingly in the midst of a Hebrew paragraph (Jer. x, 11); and two Aramaic words in Genesis xxxi, 47, on the occasion when Laban the Aramean gives to the pile of stones set up for a testimony between himself and Jacob the name of Jegar-Sahadutha, which is merely the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew Gale-ed, 'heap of witness.'"[1]

2. *From Hebrew and Aramaic to Greek.* "Aramaic, as a vehicle for profound religious thought, was poor and inexpressive and halting compared with the richness and variety of the Greek. Though capable, no doubt, of development, it did not develop, unless to a very slight extent. Greek had ready a wealth of religious and philosophic terminology, equal to the expression of the most exalted and far-reaching conceptions, and had already carried speculation to its furthest bounds. No other existing language could offer equal facilities to a doctrine that desired to be known, and a literature that claimed to have a message for all mankind. Aramaic yielded place to Greek, and for the world at large, for just and liberal thought, the change was fraught with inestimable gain."[2]

[1] Geden, "Introduction to the Hebrew Bible," pp. 3, 4. [2] Ibid. p. 167.

Of the Hebrew mind thus represented in language and literature two aspects come up for consideration.

I

The Genius of a Race. The Hebrews were of the Semitic race, whose original home was in Western Asia and Arabia. The main branches of this race were the Chaldeans, the Arabians, the Phœnicians, the Assyrians, and the Arameans; of which last-named branch the Hebrews were a division. The name Hebrew is first applied to Abram, or Abraham, the great ancestor to whom the Hebrew people traced the beginnings and distinctive trend of their faith. In him, in his personal initiative, was embodied, as was felt, the peculiar genius of the Hebrew race.

NOTES. 1. *Abraham's Guiding Idea and its Sequel.* The guiding idea which led Abram to migrate first from Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xi, 31) to Haran in Mesopotamia, and later to Canaan (Gen. xii, 4, 5), is given in Gen. xii, 1–3, and several times repeated (see Gen. xiii, 14–17; xv, 5–7); reënforced by a change of name from Abram to Abraham, Gen. xvii, 4–8. He is first called Abram the Hebrew, Gen. xiv, 13; and his descendants are called Hebrews, Exod. iii, 18, and frequently. As late as the time of Jesus the Jews were proud of their Abrahamic descent (Matt. iii, 9), and recognized their essential freedom of spirit as from him (John viii, 33). His significance for the Jewish faith is summed up in Ecclus. xliv, 19, 20; and for the Christian faith, Heb. xi, 8–12.

2. *Derivation of the Name "Hebrew."* The word "Hebrew" by its derivation means "one of the other side" — that is, of some boundary — and seems to refer to the fact that the Hebrew people came originally from beyond the Euphrates or perhaps beyond the Syrian desert. That general region, called anciently the land of Shinar (cf. Gen. xi, 2), was the cradle of the Semitic race and according to Bible ideas of the human race as well.

Every energetic race derives its initiative, its habitual determination of character, from some personal formative influence, who by the power of his personality, or some decisive experience, has impressed his mind and ideal on

followers or descendants, and thus becomes to them a kind of spiritual organic principle. Hebrew history is rich in such personal sources of influence, which will come up for consideration. We need mention here only the one from whom the race derived its primal impulse, the vital principle which distinguished the genius of this race from that of others. As one great family — the idea of which no national divisions or rivalries availed to efface — the Hebrews traced their formative energy, in its most inclusive principle, to their great ancestor Abraham, the patriarch from whom all their clans and tribes were descended. Round his life a store of traditions gathered, which in pre-literary times were transmitted from generation to generation, doubtless with increasing detail and realistic incident; which traditions later assumed their final form and setting in the Book of Genesis.

As Determined by Initiative

The energizing force of Abraham's personality, as well known to every Hebrew as is the *Mayflower* voyage and its motive to New Englanders, was a steadfast prophetic faith, a spirit of devout trust in God, which had impelled him to cut loose from country and kindred and migrate from his native Chaldea to a land yet unknown, where he could found a family and give it a purified ideal and direction. "He believed in Jehovah," it is related of him, "and he reckoned it to him for righteousness" (Gen. xv, 6); a characterization which till the latest period of scripture literature was held as a native norm of spiritual life (cf. Rom. iv, 3, 9, 22; Gal. iii, 6; Jas. ii, 23). In this faith he became assured that he would be the ancestor of an innumerable offspring, and that in his seed all the nations of mankind would be blessed (Gen. xii, 2, 3; xvii, 4–8; xxii, 16–18).

From its earliest self-expression the Hebrew temperament was keyed, as it were, to this note of faith: an attitude of spirit to be cherished and kept intact, and to be transmitted

as an ancestral heritage. It was the race's vital idea, like the modern sense of the Anglo-Saxon integrity or of the white man's burden. And it has remained, alike in religion and in practical affairs, the most elemental trait of the Hebrew nature, a latent motive working at the center of their varied experience, and kept living by their prophets and teachers.

In Abraham this faith is primitive and, as it were, undifferentiated; in his successors and descendants it matures in personal and broadly historical relations.

As Related to Racial Character

Abraham's faith was passive: an implicit dependence upon and committal to the will and mandate of God. By this he had taken the decisive step beyond the introspective quietism of the far East, and the rigidity of the Semitic mind, and centered his life on a divine guidance believed in as personal and real. His son Isaac continued this relatively neutral attitude, living and dying in peaceful relations with his neighbors, keeping intact his birthright of belief, and letting his worldly affairs shape themselves. Not so the grandson Jacob, the younger of Isaac's twin sons. His faith was an energy intensely active — a far-seeing, inventive, tenacious venture on whatever promised success in practical life. The stories told of him bring this out with wonderful realism. This active faith of his had two directions: toward the achievement of worldly success, and toward equally prized spiritual values. This combination of material and ideal is typified in the double name which he came to bear. From being Jacob, the shrewd and unscrupulous "supplanter" (Gen. xxv, 26), in which character he got the better of his father, his brother, and his father-in-law, he became in course of time Israel, "God's prevailer" (Gen. xxxii, 28), by reason of his eager determination to secure divine favor, as is shown in the story of his wrestling with the angel (Gen. xxxii, 24–31). In this latter character, and with this

new name, the patriarch lived on to a gentle and devout old age, the progenitor of the twelve tribes into whose family traits and fortunes the Israelite nation was distributed. All this reflects, as in a condensing mirror, the dominant genius of the Hebrew race. It is the development of an obedient faith into an indomitable will, bent on appropriating the blessings of life, material and spiritual. In striking accord with this primitive characterization, the Hebrew race has been and still is a power to be reckoned with both in the progress of civilization and in the evolution of a religion for the world. Here in the story of Jacob-Israel is seen portrayed, as nowhere else so succinctly, its vital dynamic of faith and will.

NOTE. It will be remembered that these stories of Abraham and Jacob, rising out of the people's self-consciousness as a nation and a race, did not assume their present form until centuries of life under Jehovah and in contact with the world had determined their racial character; and through these stories the writers interpreted their racial traits in masterly terms of individualized personality. It is historical conditions reduced to biographical detail.

In the two directions just mentioned, toward civilization and toward religion, we must take note of the peculiar genius of the Hebrew race.

As Related to a World Mission

1. For its bearing on the progress of civilization, we go back to the more primitive Semitic stock, of which the Hebrews were a branch, and whose mission it was essentially to focus its best qualities into a spiritual dynamic; and compare this with the Aryan or Indo-European stock, to which the European and western races belong. Each division of mankind had its broad and worthy function: the Semitic, endowed with religious fervor and insight, to be the pioneers of conscience and moral enlightenment; the Aryan, with its literary and artistic gifts, and its genius for practical affairs, to make intelligence available in progress and civilization. Both

have their periods of world ascendancy; and the transition from Semitic to Aryan begins to be made when Cyrus the Medo-Persian conquers the huge empire of Chaldea and finds there the Hebrews, a captive people who since the far-away time of Abraham have lived through a momentous cycle of divine education from Chaldea to Chaldea again, and are now ready to take up their appointed mission in the new order of civilization. From this epoch onward, and especially as Biblical literature matures, we can realize with increasing clearness the part which the Semitic influence was destined to play in the civilizing forces of the world.

NOTE. *Racial Influences.* Our intellectual and moral gains from the past are, broadly speaking, the resultant of two great deposits of thought and sentiment, the one the gift of the Aryan, the other a boon from the Semitic race. To the former we owe, again speaking generally, most of our mental and political acquisitions; to the latter, the principal elements of our moral and spiritual heritage. . . . The business of civilizing and saving the world, as far as the merely human factors are concerned, has been carried on through the transfer of moral and spiritual ideas and the arts of civilized life from the one race to the other. In nearly everything vital to human well-being the Semites were the founders or forerunners. . . . The greatest boon which any race or people ever conferred upon humanity, was that of religious truth and freedom, and this was the gift of the Hebrews of Palestine. Yet not by them as a race has it been or is it now being converted to the uses of the world. While the unique national career and institutions of Israel fitted that single people to be the depositaries of saving truth and knowledge, it was the civilizing genius of one branch of the Aryan race and the political supremacy of another, which prepared the wider and deeper channels through which the divinely conferred endowment was conveyed to the kindreds and people of mankind. — MCCURDY, "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments," Vol. I, pp. 5–7.

2. For its bearing on religion, we return from the undifferentiated Semitic stock, of whose intense genius "seers, martyrs, and fanatics are bred"[1] and three of the leading

[1] G. A. Smith, "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," p. 29.

religions of the world (namely, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity) have come, to the Hebrew branch, to take note of its more specific function. Here again we see how vitally their energy of faith and will coördinates with the distinctive gifts of other races. They were not eminent in art and literature and philosophic thought; this was the gift of the Greeks to the education of humanity. For the organization and administration of empire and law and government we cannot look to them; this was the gift of the Romans. But to this Hebrew race we owe preëminently the development of religious insight and conscience to the point where it is ready to transcend ethnic or racial bounds and become a universal boon for humanity. Thus they formed, so to say, one strand in a threefold cord of comprehensive development and culture, supplying the distinctively spiritual element. By reason of their unique experience and leading, religious ideas were so developed, purified, and proportioned to life, that only the culminating stage of the Christian interpretation was needed to free them from provincial limits and make them universal. No other race approaches them in this endowment. It is to the Hebrew mind the world owes it that religion is held as a vital element of practical and rational living, — that is, as a righteous character vitalized by conscience, — as distinguished from a crude magic and superstition, on the one side, and a dead mechanical formalism, on the other. And the vehicle by which this is conveyed to the world is the body of literature which the enlightened world has adopted as its Bible.

NOTE. *The Hebrew Religious Sense.* As long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense for righteousness most glowing and strongest; and in hearing and reading the words Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find a glow and a force they could find nowhere else. — ARNOLD, "Literature and Dogma," p. 50.

II

The Dominant Aptitude. Every nation has its distinctive type of mind, its characteristic approach to things. In its contemplation of the world of nature and man and life, that attitude to the universe out of which comes its distinctive strain of literary utterance, the Hebrew mind may best be understood, perhaps, by comparison with the Greek, the one other great originative mind of history.

While the Greek mind was keenly intellectual, apt in abstract thinking and reasoning, the Hebrew mind was intense, concrete, realistic. To the Greek, truth presented itself in principles, laws, logical deductions; to the Hebrew in analogies, intuitions, descriptive imagery. We may in part name these dominant aptitudes by saying the Greek was a born philosopher, the Hebrew an alert observer. From the Greek cast of mind comes abstract and systematic thinking; from the Hebrew cast of mind, keen observation and intuitive insight. St. Paul has touched upon this distinction in his remark that the Jews look for a sign, while the Greeks seek after wisdom; by which he means that while the Greeks project their own intellectual powers onward to solve the problem of being in human terms, the Hebrews begin with belief in the divine, the personal Source of all life, and interpret facts and events as tokens of His working. Hence their tendency to invest everything they see and experience with spiritual values, to explore life in terms of personal worth and conduct.

Bearing on Literature

The bearing of this aptitude of mind on their distinctive gift in literature may be expressed in a quotation from Professor S. H. Butcher. "While philosophy," he says, "had for the Jews no meaning, history had a deeper significance than it bore to any other people. It was the chief factor in their national unity, the source from which they drew ethical and spiritual enlightenment.

Thither they turned as to living oracles inscribed with the finger of the Almighty. To history they appealed as the supreme tribunal of God's justice." [1]

Accordingly we see that the whole body of the Hebrew literature, as we have it in the Bible, is closely interwoven with history: history read as luminous with the presence of God, and therefore sensed in its inner meanings, rather than in dead annals and chronicles. Their laws, when compiled and codified, are set in a framework of history. Their poetry and didactics are associated with historic names and personages. Their prophecy rises and flourishes as the larger outlooks of history call for it, interpreting by vital principles the history that is current and the historical crises that are impending. It is in the concrete events that pass before their eyes, or are remembered from their past, that they trace the direct working of Jehovah and the signs of His will and purpose for the future.

Inhering with this Hebrew sense for the inner meanings of history, a phase of it indeed, is the fact that the whole trend of their literature is prophetic. They showed their sense of this in making up their canon by calling the whole line of historians from Joshua to 2 Kings "the former prophets." They were schooled to the consciousness that they were a divinely chosen people, a people with a high destiny, toward which the events of their history were being shaped according to the purpose of Jehovah. Hence prophecy, as a constant and organic element of history, has greater power, range, depth, and significance for the Hebrews than for any other people. The Hebrew mind is peculiarly susceptible to it, and thinks in its large terms. Accordingly, one of the most remarkable phenomena of the world's literature is Hebrew prophecy; it is the supreme literary product of this gifted race's genius.

[1] Butcher, "Harvard Lectures on Greek Subjects," p. 29.

NOTES. 1. *The Historical Consciousness of the Hebrews.* The sum of book-learning was small; men of all ranks mingled with that Oriental freedom which is so foreign to our habits; shrewd observation, a memory retentive of traditional lore, and the faculty of original reflection took the place of laborious study as the ground of acknowledged intellectual pre-eminence. — SMITH, "The Prophets of Israel," p. 126.

Everything that befell Israel was interpreted by the prophets as a work of Jehovah's hand, displaying His character and will — not an arbitrary character or a changeable will, but a fixed and consistent holy purpose, which has Israel for its object and seeks the true felicity of the nation, but at the same time is absolutely sovereign over Israel, and will not give way to Israel's desires or adapt itself to Israel's convenience. — SMITH, "The Prophets of Israel," p. 70.

2. *The Nature of Prophecy.* Of course by prophecy is meant something broader and more rational than mere prediction of events; it is a spiritual presage based on a grounded interpretation of present conditions and tendencies. McCurdy thus defines it with primary reference to the Second Isaiah: "He did not, strictly speaking, foresee events; he saw conditions. Prediction is essentially a view of details, while the spiritual element in prophecy has primarily not to do with results, but with factors and principles and their divinely constituted inner relations." — MCCURDY, "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments," Vol. III, p. 424.

II. The Hebrew Heritage

A race's heritage, what it derives by bequest or endowment from its ancestral past, must be construed liberally. Not lands and property alone, not such wealth as the nation's industries have accumulated, but its inheritance of ideas and working energies, must be included. The Hebrew heritage, in this comprehensive sense, as the prophets and historians came to interpret it, was something quite unique in racial experience, and contained the germs of the nation's peculiar mission. Some salient factors of it must here be noted for their bearing on the development of their literature.

Although so alert to respond to the inner meanings of events, it is not to be expected that the Hebrew people should come into their historical self-consciousness at once, or quickly. It is not until long after events occur that their bearings and import can become clear. The histories that we have in the opening books of the Bible, from Genesis to Joshua, could not well have assumed their final form until Israel had come into possession of its land and developed its national and organic principle to the point where it could act and be acted upon among the peoples of the earth. Then their men of insight could see and understand the way in which they had been led, and the direction in which their experience pointed. Before that, while the people were slowly emerging from primitive conditions to an organized monarchy, their literary utterances would naturally be concerned with affairs too immediate and limited to have permanent Biblical value, except as here and there some song or story had the larger touch which fitted it to survive its time. From these scanty remainders of contemporary literature we must choose some work from which as a landmark we can reckon both backwards and forwards: backward toward the traditions that the people have in store; forward toward the destiny that is beginning to dawn upon their minds.

From what Point Estimated

Fortunately such a landmark exists, whose authenticity as a work contemporary with its event is not seriously questioned, and which scholars praise as "one of the most ancient and magnificent remains of early Hebrew literature."[1] It has already been mentioned as our starting point:[2] the Song of Deborah, in Judges v. It is a song of victory, commemorating the wonderful deliverance of Israel from a twenty years' oppression under Jabin King of Canaan; and a song of praise to Jehovah, who had

[1] Oesterly, in Hastings' "Biblical Dictionary" (one-volume edition).
[2] See above, p. 5.

inspired that coöperation of the tribes which under Him had made the victory possible. The song dates from about a century after the Israelites had effected entrance into the promised land, while they were struggling to obtain a stable foothold and independence therein, and while the memory of their deliverance from Egypt had still the vigor of a motive power among the scattered tribes.

NOTE. *The Significance of Deborah's Song.* The Hebrew tribes were scattered in little communities over the land of Canaan, both east and west of the Jordan; and as the song recognizes they had their various local interests. But Deborah assumes that they may all be appealed to on the ground of a common tribal unity and a common loyalty to Jehovah. It is the thought of their God Jehovah, and of their obligation to come to His help against the mighty (cf. vs. 23), which makes a ground of appeal for all the tribes. Jehovah has come to fight for them from His residence in the Sinai region (vss. 4, 5); the loyal tribes have come from their scattered homes to the plain of Esdraelon; Deborah herself, coming from far in the hill-country of Ephraim, has stirred up Barak in his northern home to throw himself into the common cause; and all, fighting shoulder to shoulder, are sure that their enemies are the enemies of Jehovah (cf. vs. 31); they see by the event also that Jehovah has been in the battle, too, by bringing the powers of nature to their aid (vss. 20, 21). The song recognizes the danger that the tribes had been in, of losing national identity by choosing new gods (vs. 8; cf. Deut. xxxii, 17), and of being absorbed in their own clannish affairs as were some of the tribes (vss. 15–17); and the fact that a remnant (vs. 13) came down and risked their lives for independence is the reassuring motive of the song:

> For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
> For that the people offered themselves willingly,
> Bless ye Jehovah."

An author implies an audience; a song reveals the mental and emotional key both of singer and of hearers. Let us take occasion of this glimpse into contemporary conditions to inquire what fund of idea and sentiment the people had inherited from their past, and what hopes for their corporate future. We may note the contents of this heritage under two heads.

I

The Allotted Land. It was for foothold and security in the land of Canaan that the Hebrews were fighting; it was for victory over a people that had colonized the land before them that Deborah sang her praise to Jehovah. They had not really inherited the land. Their ancestor Abraham had owned only a burial place therein (Gen. xxiii; cf. Acts vii, 5); and the other patriarchs had roamed at will over common pasture lands, without building or buying (cf. Heb. xi, 9, 13). Thus the land was an allotment, not an inheritance; and what they inherited was a traditional claim to it, which they traced to a promise made by Jehovah to Abraham (Exod. vi, 8; xxxiii, 1–3). Their right to it was after all the right of conquest, like any invasion; but it contained the germ of a new and till then unknown motive. Their invasion was not predatory, like a Bedouin raid; not a grasping for power and aggrandizement, like the later Assyrian campaigns. Their motive was peaceful, as befitted a race of herdsmen and small farmers; but it was vitalized also with the faith of their ancestor Abraham, which gave a religious value to the land where he had lived and died. It was theirs, because his faith in Jehovah's promise was theirs.

NOTE. *The Promise to Abraham.* For the successive stages of the covenant by which the land was promised to Abraham and his posterity, see Gen. xii, 1–3; xiii, 14–17; xv, 5–14; xxii, 15–18. These of course are described in the form taken by the later finished history; but the tradition of the promise was rooted in the primitive tribal consciousness. For the vitality of this tradition in Hebrew poetry, see Psa. cv, 8–12.

The Israelite's ardent attachment to his land is shown in the innumerable passages where its scenery, its weather, its products, its occupations are dwelt upon; but beyond this, too, it was to him a mirror of the great men and great deeds of history. The patriarchal age, between which and his own a chasm intervened, was kept vividly in mind by the altars

erected at places where the patriarchs had dwelt, — Hebron, Mamre, Beersheba, Bethel, Shechem; all of which places had their ancient stories and prophetic suggestions. No other nation has more truly heeded the spirit expressed in Tennyson's poem:

> Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
> From out the storied Past, and used
> Within the Present, but transfused
> Thro' future time by power of thought.

In a true sense their land was to them like a book, in which they read histories and prophecies full of present uses. We may note its meanings in two aspects.

As a School of Character

The favorite Biblical description of Palestine calls it "a land flowing with milk and honey"; this, however, is the language of enthusiasm. A more discriminating account of it is ascribed to Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy, where, before the Israelites enter it, he contrasts it with the land they have left. "For," he says, "the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."[1] This description distinguishes between a land which needs little outlay of labor and a land which requires strenuous care and attention. Of this latter sort was the land of Canaan. It had great diversities of landscape, elevation, soil and climate; great fertility, too, under proper cultivation; but it demanded unremitting diligence and industry on the part of the possessor, and ceaseless vigilance against marauders

[1] Deut. xi, 10–12.

and wild beasts; was much exposed also to blights, plagues of insects, and ravages of storm and drought. The effort to meet such conditions, and to subdue the land to their use, would call forth in the Israelites many of the most sterling elements of character: steadiness, alertness, devotedness, persistence, patience, — virtues which under the general term meekness are said to inherit the land (cf. Psa. xxxvii, 11; Matt. v, 5). Such resolute traits as these, offsetting and supplementing their native intensity of faith and will, were well fitted to develop the strong character needed for the evolution of a world purpose; and this land was the divinely allotted school for it.

As the Theater of a Great Design

It is worth while to note, in view of what later came of it, the seemingly designed fitness of this "least of all lands" to be as it were the laboratory for the shaping of an eternal idea; the theater for the evolution of a history and a literature which should be for the enlightening and ennobling of all mankind.

We have already mentioned its central location, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, and as nearly as may be at the meeting place of the three great continents Asia, Africa, and Europe. As for its connections by sea, it is comparatively isolated from other lands, owing to the lack of good harbors on its coast. As to its land connections, it may be regarded as virtually an oasis between two stretches of desert; beyond which latter were situated, in Bible times, the two great centers of ancient culture and civilization. These were: Egypt, across the Sinaitic peninsula to the southwest; and Chaldea, with its daughter monarchy Assyria, in the Tigris and Euphrates region, beyond the great Syrian desert to the east. This intermediate land of Palestine, then, was the bridge of communication between these world centers; across which lay the international routes of travel, traffic, and war. The caravan roads from Egypt and Ethiopia, passing up the western coast

from Gaza around the headland of Carmel, crossed the plain of Esdraelon, where Deborah's song of victory was sung, and then, rounding the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, stretched onward past Mount Hermon to Damascus, and still onward to Mesopotamia. Thus Palestine, though so sequestered, and in size too insignificant to be of importance among the leading nations, was yet in the very midst of the energies and activities of the ancient world, and felt the pulsation of all its movements.

It was not in the nature of the Hebrews to remain indifferent spectators of the movements of things around them. With their native genius for reading the signs of the times in events, their prophets and historians were keen critics of their neighbors, and curious observers of the course of empire. This aptitude finds much expression in their literature. Their historians trace their kinship with the nations round them, — Edom, Moab, Ammon, Ishmael, Syria. Their prophets have oracles not only for their own people but for their neighbor nations, — as one can read in Amos, Isaiah, Nahum, Obadiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Along with their own national experience they acquire a sense that their land is destined to be a center of light and guidance for other nations as well (cf. Isa. ii, 2–4; lx, 1–5); and that however the Hebrews may be dispersed among the nations, yet their capital and mother city is here, and they retain the customs and religion learned here. In other words, from this centrally located land there was destined to go forth, through its literature and its developed character, a leavening and penetrative influence into all the world. And from the beginning of their residence there the minds of their prophets and leaders were keyed to the idea that God had placed them there in the working out of some momentous design.

II

The Inherited Fund of Ideas. When Deborah sang of tribal coöperation and divine aid, she shaped her ode in conformity with ideas that had come in with her race's birth and grown with its growth. Her hearers had a fund of vital conceptions and sentiments on which she and all the leaders of Israel after her could draw, and to which they could appeal. This was their real heritage; more truly than the land, which was their culture-field, or than their prosperity and freedom, which were but adjuncts of their national success. It was their unique fund of ideas, inherited from long generations, which laid the foundation for their later power in the world.

We are not concerned here to trace the ideas which they had in common with the great Semitic stock from which they were derived. These will come up for consideration later.[1] Their forms of worship were like those of the communities around them; which communities themselves were Semitic, inheriting much from a common source. The racial faith and temperament inherited from the patriarchs has already been noted — not so much an idea as a subconscious nature and temperament. Nor are we concerned with hereditary customs, many of them crude and barbaric, which they will naturally outgrow or refine as they advance to higher grades of civilization. We are to take note rather of certain ideas which differentiate the Israelite people from others; ideas which, being comparatively recent, have the vigor and vitality of newness still upon them. We may regard these as the formative principles of the nation's thought and religion and literature.

It will be remembered that with this Song of Deborah we are striking into the history of these Israelites when they have been only about a century released from an era

[1] See Chapter III, Looking Before and After.

of Egyptian bondage. It was to that wonderful deliverance, with its attendant circumstances and revelations, that they traced their beginning as a nation. Before that their unit of corporate life had been that of the family, derived from the primitive conditions of the patriarchs. On their way from Egypt to Canaan, however, a transition which took a full generation of wilderness training, new ideas must be instilled into their minds, and emphasized by momentous events, to fit them for the freedom and development that awaited them. These we gather from the history recounted in the books of Exodus and Numbers. Three of the main fundamental ideas, all derived from concrete historical events, we will consider.

1. The God Who Is

While the Hebrews were still in Egypt, sunk in apathy and spirit-broken by oppression, Moses, one of their kinsmen of the tribe of Levi, who by a strange providence had obtained a thorough education (cf. Acts vii, 22) but then had been for forty years an outlaw in the land of Midian, received from God a commission to return and, putting himself at their head, lead them to the land promised to their fathers. It was a commission to be the founder and lawgiver of a nation, the pioneer in a new historical movement. According to the ideas of his time each nation or community was known by the name of its tutelar deity; it was natural therefore that Moses' first inquiry would be for the name of the God who thus commissioned him, that he might report it to his people. The divine answer assured him that this was no new or unfamiliar God but the one whom they and their fathers had always worshiped (Exod. iii, 16). The name, however, was new to them, and had a meaning which they could appropriate to their needs and ideals as citizens of a new commonwealth.

This revealing of a new name for God was like taking a conception of deity which had always been a kind of half

real abstraction and making it individual and concrete. The name by which the patriarchs had worshiped their deity was El Shaddai (Exod. vi, 3), which we translate "God Almighty"; the word for God, "El," which still survives in the Mohammedan name "Allah," meaning "might" or "power." In the scripture it is oftenest used in the plural, "Elohim," as if one should say "The Powers," but construed with a singular verb. He was conceived, it would seem, as an undifferentiated power in nature and events, but with no clear idea of moral character or of personal relation. Such a God could indeed have become well-nigh lost to the enslaved Israelites in the multitude of local and natural deities of which Egypt was full. The new name, vouchsafed at Moses' request, was first given not as a name but as a meaning, from which the name should be coined. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod. iii, 14). This was merely putting into the first person ('Eh'yeh) what they were to express and understand in the third. The name was "Yahweh," or "Jehovah" (יהוה), and in its comprehensive meaning was to be understood as "He who is," or "The God who is."

This name plays so commanding a part in the whole experience and literature of the Israelites that a further consideration of it is here in place. It is a peculiarity of the Hebrew verb that it has no present tense, in our feeling of the term. Its two tenses are past and future; and this name, being in the future, signifies more nearly "He who will be" than "He who is." But even the Hebrew past and future tenses are not like ours. Instead of denoting simply time, they denote rather completed action (or state) and continuous action. We come still nearer to the meaning of this name, then, by understanding it "He who is being," "He who eternally is." Matthew Arnold's designation, "The Eternal," does not give quite the main emphasis of the term;

it may perhaps best be represented in modern phrase as "He who really is," or "The God Reality," — the Being who is and will be, as distinguished from some Power which seems to be, or which can be changed, or which is conjectured to be. The verb is left unpredicated. *What* He will eternally be it is for men's experience to find out: all that they need — guide, protector, defender, friend; or, if they are disloyal and false — judge, corrector, chastiser. And the more sincerely personal their felt relation to Him, the more real will He be to them. It is as if the loftiest theme of their literature and thinking were condensed into a word, whose depth and breadth of meaning are inexhaustible.

The Israelites' primal relation to this newly named God is very simple. When Moses receives the name and the duty they do not yet know Him, and they are not arbitrarily commanded or compelled to serve Him. He invites them rather to take Him on trust, and make the venture for freedom in reliance on His promise. The token by which they will know that their deliverer is indeed Jehovah is that later they will serve Him on that same mountain where He is now talking with Moses (Exod. iii, 12). Thus from the outset of their struggle for home and independence they are in the conscious attitude of a nation continually realizing and verifying a promise, discovering through experience the reality of their national Deity.

NOTES. 1. *Written and Oral Use of the Name.* It will be noted that in the Authorized and English Revised versions of the Bible the name "Jehovah" occurs but seldom, while in the American Revised it occurs very frequently; and that wherever it occurs in the American Revised the other versions have the title LORD printed in capitals. It is also asserted by scholars that "Jehovah" is not the right spelling of the name, but "Jahveh," or rather "Yahveh." These variations rise from the curious history connected with the name. The Hebrew alphabet, it must be premised, consists only of consonants, and until long after the language had ceased to be a living one the name was written in the four consonants YHVH. In the later writing of the language vowel

signs were added to the words above and below the line; but as the Hebrews, from excess of reverence, never pronounced the name of their Deity, the true pronunciation had become lost. When in reading they came to the name they substituted for it the title "Lord" (Hebrew "Adonai"); and it was the vowels of this title that were added to the four consonants YHVH, making the name "YeHoVaH." The Authorized version has retained the title LORD, while the American Revised has adopted the name "Jehovah," but with the vowels belonging to "Adonai."

2. *The Name Attributed Earlier.* In the J account of the early patriarchal times the name "Jehovah," or "Jehovah Elohim," is used in connection with events much earlier than this revelation of the name to Moses; this because in the naïve idea of this popular source no time is contemplated when Jehovah was not the God of the Hebrews and of all mankind. For a similar though somewhat more dogmatic reason the P source, in Gen. iv, 26, dates the beginning of Jehovah worship in the days of Enosh the grandson of Adam.

3. *The Name in National Use.* After the kingdoms of Judah and Israel are established, the name of the national Deity is compounded with other words in the names given to kings and prophets. A shortened form "Jah" (cf. Exod. xv, 2, Psa. lxviii, 4, margin) is generally employed in composition, especially at the end of a name. The compound with the divine name may be recognized, wherever it occurs, by the prefix *Jo* or *Jeho* (for example, Joram, Jehoshaphat), or by the final *jah* or *iah* (for example, Elijah, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah). The word "Hallelujah," which occurs many times in the later psalms, is a liturgical compound meaning "Praise ye Jehovah." The name is also joined with other names to mark momentous junctures in history; for example, Jehovah-jireh, Gen. xxii, 14; Jehovah-nissi, Exod. xvii, 15; Jehovah-shalom, Jud. vi, 24.

2. The Verifying Deliverance

The natural tendency of nations, as has been remarked by historians, is to glorify their beginnings. No nation would willingly own to a primal state of slavery unless it were undeniably so. It is characteristic of the Hebrews, however, that the birth of their nation, the initial event of which they were proud, is identified with a great deliverance from bondage, a deliverance which in themselves they were powerless to effect, and which was rendered hard and thankless by their unfaith and rebellion. Thus the idea which they had inherited, and which was

fostered as a motive by their prophets, was that not their valor or power or desert had made them a nation, but the loving-kindness of Jehovah, who had chosen them to be a peculiar people with a unique mission and destiny among the nations.

This deliverance from Egypt was the direct verification of Jehovah's promise. He had through Moses summoned them to take Him, the God with the new name, as it were on trial; and as they took Him at His word and made their dash for freedom, naturally they were alert to discover signs that He was with them and for them.

Their first identification of their new God was at the Red Sea, where, seemingly entrapped, with "the foe behind and the deep before," they made a marvelous escape through the bed of the sea, which a strong wind had laid bare, and then, wind and tide shifting, saw their pursuers overwhelmed and drowned. In the story of this deliverance is preserved a magnificent song of thanksgiving (Exod. xv, 1–18), of which the nucleus at least is contemporary with the event. It was sung antiphonally by male and female choirs, Miriam the sister of Aaron leading the women with timbrels and dances (Exod. xv, 1, 20). It expresses, largely in fervid description, their realization of the stupendous event, and their sense of having found a God and Deliverer whom they could name and know.

> I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
> The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
> Jehovah is my strength and song,
> And he is become my salvation;
> This is my God, and I will praise him;
> My father's God, and I will exalt him.

It is noteworthy that with this first identification of their deliverer they form a corresponding idea of his nature:

> Jehovah is a man of war:
> Jehovah is his name.

It is their first clear identification of God with experience.

This fact of deliverance by the direct action of divine power became from this time the fundamental idea of the Israelite people; an idea which, under the name of salvation, took on a more spiritual sense as their experience became more inward. They not only dated their nation's beginning from it, but had constant recourse to it in times of trial or extremity. The Book of Judges, for instance, is all written to give numerous cases wherein Jehovah, while a stable government was gradually being formed, rescued the people through the agency of champions from the helpless condition into which they had fallen. In this initial deliverance at the Red Sea the people had no active part; they had only to "stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah" (Exod. xiv, 13). As time went on, however, they learned to associate His work more intimately with their own endeavors. In Deborah's song, for instance, He is recognized as having come up from His home in Sinai when the Israelites are hard pressed in battle, to sweep away their foes by the storm and the flooded river Kishon (Judg. v, 20, 21); but it is to deliver a people who have already come "to the help of Jehovah against the mighty" (Judg. v, 23). So gradually their experience teaches them that in this matter of deliverance the human is to coöperate with the divine; but for a long period their successes are brought about in a way that verifies the power of Jehovah as the real Deliverer. A typical instance of this is the case of Gideon, who wrought a signal deliverance from the Midianites by a clever stratagem, but not until, by Jehovah's command, he had reduced his army from thirty-two thousand to three hundred, "lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, 'Mine own hand hath saved me'" (Judg. vii, 2).

With the refining idea of deliverance, from an external rescue to an inner salvation, came a more rational idea of the means by which God made Himself known. First identifying Him, as in the songs of Miriam and Deborah,

with the violent and exceptional phenomena of nature, — storm and lightning and earthquake, forces made to destroy, — it is by slow experience that they learn to associate Him first with beneficent forces of sunshine and rain, and later with the inner life of men. It is a gradual growth in the verification of God's working from material to spiritual. It may be illustrated by an incident in the life of the prophet Elijah, whose idea of verifying Jehovah's reality to Israel was by means of famine and miracle. In a time of reaction and doubt, when all his work seemed to have been in vain (1 Kings xix), the prophet went to find Jehovah at His ancient dwelling place in Horeb, and there learned that neither wind nor earthquake nor fire is the real manifestation of the divine to man, but "a still small voice," speaking as it were within the soul (1 Kings xix, 12). This incident may serve as a kind of landmark in the progressive refinement of the idea which lay at the basis of their religious life. It enabled them to verify the word and continued power of their Deliverer in terms not merely of nature and war but of the inner life of manhood.

3. The Mutual Relation by Covenant

The series of events by which the Israelites were transformed from a race enslaved and spirit-broken to a people conscious of a unity and coördination of interests culminates in a covenant, or compact, made at Mount Sinai, after the people had found by a considerable experience that Jehovah was keeping His word. As they inherited the tradition of it, this compact was solemnized by portentous natural phenomena on the sacred mountain (Exod. xix, 16–20); while to Moses, who was called to the top of the mountain, were given two tablets of stone, on which were engraved the ten "words," or fundamental commands of the law (Exod. xx), and, as it was believed, certain oral instructions constituting a primitive code for a people in their state and situation (Exod. xxi–xxiii). The chapters which contain this oldest stratum of the law are

called the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xxiv, 7). To this covenant the people agreed at Sinai, soon after their escape from Egypt. Again at Shechem, when the possession of the land was assured to them, they solemnly renewed their covenant of loyalty to Jehovah, and their promise to serve no other god (Josh. xxiv, 19–25).

Such was the Israelites' conscious idea of the origin of their religion and their corporate life. It differs from that of other nations in being so realistic; and merits attention for the unique relation it recognizes between the human and the divine — a relation in which inheres the vitality of their religion, as compared with other religions of the world. All nations had a sense of an unseen power or powers controlling the affairs of nature and man; it is a sense native to humanity. The great effort of the ages has been to establish rational and intelligent communication with that Power. If it is sensed as merely an unknown and arbitrary Autocracy in nature, the varieties and contrasts of natural phenomena suggest polytheism, a multitude of discordant powers. Imagination conceives of these under natural forms — suns and stars, gods of thunder and storm and earthquake, or beasts of prey and burden; and the conception of the unseen has little if any moral content. It is naturally regarded accordingly as a power not to be loved but *used* for human purposes; and the way to secure his good will is either to bribe him by costly offerings and prescribed rites, or, in cases of doubt, by some occult means of divination and magic. All worship is thus rendered doubtful and tentative, and all service either an unchosen slavery or a capricious opportunism.

The Israelites were the one nation of antiquity to depart radically from this idolatrous idea. This they did by taking their experience as revealing a personal Being, with a mind and will like their own, and after preliminary trial of His good will by making a solemn compact or covenant with Him.

In a compact the two parties stand on common and in a sense equal ground. Both are doing what they see is good, and what they freely agree to do; both, for the sake of certain desirable objects, bind themselves to certain duties and obligations. The simple terms of the Israelites' compact were so well known to all, that prophets and leaders could appeal to them as a matter of loyalty and conscience. By it Jehovah promises to carry out the deliverance of which He has already given a foretaste and sample: to be their Guide, Defender, Saviour, Judge. On their part they bind themselves to have Him alone as their God, discarding all others; to learn His nature, and to obey His will both in worship of Him and in conduct toward one another.

The solemn instrument or document of this compact is embodied in what is called the Ten Words, first given in Exodus xx, and later repeated in Deuteronomy v. This, perhaps the oldest and most familiar portion of their literature, condenses their law of living to a nucleus of ten rules, so primitively ordered (if primitive minds are addressed) that they can be remembered by counting on the ten fingers; and yet so far-reaching and comprehensive that to the end of their history priest and magistrate and prophet can use them as a final appeal.

Note. As we have the Ten Commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy, some of them have clauses of explanation and amplification appended to them; but in their original form they were more nearly a literal "ten words" code, being capable of expression nearly in single Hebrew words with the negative *lo'* prefixed (in all but two, for they are mostly taboos or prohibitions). It is not improbable that in their present form they represent a considerable history of gradual finish and perhaps selection.

Of the racial and religious ideas which the Israelites inherited, we have mentioned only the salient ones, the ideas to which their leaders could appeal and which all their literature could presuppose. By the thought of the land given

to their fathers and restored to them as the theater of a divine purpose, they were pledged to unity, patriotism, pride in making the land desirable in the eyes of nations. By the thought of a God who had revealed Himself in a prophetic name and a momentous deliverance, they were pledged to acknowledge Him in the experiences of life, and in whatever He sent of blessing or warning. By the remembered covenant, the distinctive constitution of their corporate life, they were pledged to their part of it, to reverence and be true to it, as experience made it fitting. These ideas are vital in all their literature. They are appealed to and enforced by all the poets and prophets. And we begin the study of that literature just as these formative ideas are in the vigor of their prime.

Summary of Israel's Fund of Ideas

III. Before the Age of Books

For the beginnings of Biblical literature we have to go back far beyond the age of written books or scholarly learning to an age when ideas were conveyed orally and perpetuated in memory. We are to think of times not unlike those in the history of English literature from which we get our store of popular ballads. These ballads had circulated in the people's memory for a long time before it occurred to scholars and antiquarians to reduce them to writing. So with the earliest examples that we have of Biblical literature. They spring from the experiences of a people unlettered, in the book sense, but not unliterary. They merely assume a form adapted to oral transmission; and they undergo a molding process in the people's memory, subject to changes and refinements of wording until they become stereotyped and permanent. Thus they become literature, with a form and artistry of its own; an artistry adapted rather to the ear and the memory than to the eye and the library.

All the earlier literature of the Bible, down to the end of David's reign, abounds in evidences of this oral origin, molding, and transmission. In fact the personal word, spoken or chanted, was the norm of literary discourse, which the later written productions never lost. Of the form of such personal utterance it is essential that it be vividly realized, easily grasped, and retainable unchanged in memory. These are not book qualities, formal and academic; they are the limpid qualities of speech and story and song, addressed to the minds not merely of scholars but of common people.

NOTES. 1. *The Common Folk Basis of Literature.* In accounting for the origin of English ballad poetry Professor Kittredge ("English and Scottish Popular Ballads," Introd., p. xix) describes conditions of life very similar to what we may attribute to the Hebrews in their various experiences of communal life: "'Folk' is a large word. It suggests a whole nation, or at all events a huge concourse of people. Let us abandon it, then, for the moment, and think rather of a small tribal gathering, assembled, in very early times, or — what for the anthropologist amounts to the same thing — under very simple conditions of life, for the purpose of celebrating some occasion of common interest, — a successful hunt, or the return from a prosperous foray, or the repulse of a band of marauding strangers. The object of the meeting is known to all; the deeds which are to be sung, the dance which is to accompany and illustrate the singing, are likewise familiar to every one. There is no such diversity of intellectual interests as characterizes even the smallest company of civilized men. There is unity of feeling and a common stock, however slender, of ideas and traditions. The dancing and singing, in which all share, are so closely related as to be practically complementary parts of a single festal act. Here, now, we have the 'folk' of our discussion, reduced, as it were, to its lowest terms, — a singing, dancing throng subjected as a unit to a mental and emotional stimulus which is not only favorable to the production of poetry, but is almost certain to result in such production."

2. *Transmission by Memory.* How literature in poetic form made its way among the Arabs before the age of books is described by Professor A. B. Davidson, "Biblical and Literary Essays," pp. 264, 265: "No poems were written before Islam. But, once shot from the poet's mouth, they flew across the desert faster than arrows. The maidens

sang them as they went, with their pitchers on their shoulders, to the well. The camel driver cheered himself and his weary beasts with them, as they wended their way over the monotonous sands under the bright Pleiades. . . . Before Islam, writing seems to have been little practised. Poems were written on the hearts of the people. Their brevity made this easy, their sententiousness, their proverb-like character, their succession of brilliant images, each like a rich pearl, and the whole, as the Arabs are never weary of saying, like a string of pearls."

In considering the primitive literature before the age of books, we need to note how much of it remains to us in primitive form, what native literary types it reveals, and what are its limitations as a vehicle for Biblical truth.

I

Literary Fragments and Remainders. In the first eight books of the Hebrew Bible, which narrate the history of Israel to the end of the reign of David,[1] there are a good many quoted passages, mostly of poetry, which are evidently more ancient than the text in which they occur. The source from which some of these are derived is named; indicating that collections of such fugitive pieces were made before the history was written, and that these were drawn upon as sources or illustrations of the written history itself.

The twenty-first chapter of Numbers contains three such quotations; and the first of these, verses 14, 15, is referred to a book now lost, called "The Book of the Wars of Jehovah." It reads like little more than a collection of local names, and perhaps preserves in poetic form the determination of a boundary. "Perhaps," says Professor Geden, "we are to understand that the Song of the Well also (vss. 17, 18), and the Ode of Triumph over Heshbon

[1] This takes us to the end of 1 Samuel; but from this account the books of Leviticus and Ruth are to be left out, Leviticus representing a later developed code of legislation, and Ruth belonging to the latest compiled division of the Hebrew canon.

(vss. 27–30), are derived from the same source," though the latter, it should be said, is attributed to those who "speak in proverbs" (vs. 27). "The title would seem to indicate that the book was a treasury of war songs, national epics, celebrating the victories of Israel which Israel's God had given her over her foes."[1] These quotations are mere fragments, and perhaps that is why their source is named; but if such an anthology was in existence, it seems not unlikely that it was headed by the Song of Miriam at the Red Sea (Exod. xv); and that the Song of Deborah belonged to the same collection. The subject matter of all these accords fitly with the implication of the title.

NOTE. If this Book of the Wars of Jehovah was thus a repository of poetic pieces compiled while the Israelites were fighting for possession of the land, it is perhaps not too presuming to attempt a list of the pieces that we have preserved from it:

Song at the Red Sea, Exod. xv, 1–18.
The Ark Song, Num. x, 35, 36.
Song of the Valley, Num. xxi, 14, 15, — where the source is named.
Song of the Well, Num. xxi, 17, 18.
Satire (attributed to parable-speakers) on the Fall of Heshbon, Num. xxi, 27–30.
The Oracles of Balaam, Num. xxiii, xxiv.
The Song of Deborah, Judg. v.

Another collection of ancient song, called "The Book of Jashar" (lit. the "Upright"), is twice quoted from by name. The first time, in Joshua x, 12, 13, the quotation is a fervid address by Joshua to the sun and moon, the famous passage in which he bids these luminaries stand still (lit. "be dumb") until he has finished his conquest of the Amorites.

> Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
> And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon,

is his apostrophe; and the verse goes on to say:

> And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,
> Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies, —

[1] Geden, "Introduction to the Hebrew Bible," pp. 267, 268.

a couplet which commemorates the wonders of a long afternoon's battle, with its hard-won victory. It is likelier to refer to a hailstorm than to a miracle; but the prose historian has interpreted the lyric outburst too literally, as an actual stopping of the sun and a day miraculously prolonged (vss. 13, 14). Read as poetry, it is in much the same strain of enthusiastic hyperbole as we find in Deborah's song of victory over Sisera (Judg. v, 20):

> From heaven fought the stars;
> From their courses they fought against Sisera.

The second quotation from the Book of Jashar, found in 2 Samuel i, 17–27, preserves for us the elegy of David over the death of Saul and Jonathan. The obscure note appended by way of preface is thought by some to indicate that the elegy, as taught to the people, was set to a musical melody entitled "The Bow." If this is so (and we have examples of such prescribed melodies in the titles of some of the Psalms; see, for example, Psa. xxii, title), we get a hint of how poetic literature was preserved and made current before the age of books.

David's lament over Abner, Saul's general-in-chief (2 Sam. iii, 33, 34), who was treacherously assassinated by David's general Joab, may well have been preserved in this same collection.

NOTES. 1. *A Possible Third Reference to the Book of Jashar.* In 1 Kings viii, 12, 13, the Greek version (LXX) differs from the Hebrew in its report of King Solomon's dedicatory prayer; as Professor Robertson Smith thus translates it:

> Jehovah created the sun in the heavens,
> But he hath determined to dwell in darkness.
> "Build my house, an house of habitation for me,
> A place to dwell in eternally."[1]

To this poetic extract, which seems more ancient than its context, the LXX adds, "Behold, is it not written in the Book of Song?" But, as

[1] Smith, "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 403, note 2.

Professor Smith remarks, "the transposition of a single letter in the Hebrew converts the unknown Book of Song into the well-known Book of Jashar." So if this Greek version represents a Hebrew original, *ha-shir* may easily have been mistakenly copied for *ha-yashar*. Professor Smith remarks: "This correction seems certain. The slip of the Septuagint translator was not unnatural; indeed, the same change is made by the Syriac in Josh. x, 13."

2. *The Contents of the Book of Jashar*. This book, devoted perhaps to notable personages as the other cited book was to great deeds, must thus have covered a period of compilation just about identical with our period before the age of books, namely, from Joshua (or perhaps Moses) to Solomon. As in the case of the other book, one is tempted to conjecture of its contents (as preserved to us) somehow thus:

The Song of Moses, Deut. xxxii, 1–43.
The Blessing of Moses, Deut. xxxiii, 2–29.
Apostrophe to Sun and Moon, Josh. x, 12, 13 (fragment).
David's Elegy on Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1, 19–27.
David's Lament over Abner, 2 Sam. iii, 33, 34 (probably fragment).
David's Last Words, 2 Sam. xxiii, 1–17.
Solomon's Words at Dedication of Temple, 1 Kings viii, 12, 13 (LXX) (fragment).

Besides these extracts thus referred to collections, the attribution of the Heshbon song in Numbers xxi, 27–30 to "them that speak in proverbs" seems to refer not to literature preserved in books but to literature made popular among the people by speakers in parables, and preserved orally like a ballad. Such indeed is the source of most of the quotations that occur in the historical books. They come not from professional men of letters but from the life of the common people. They may express an ancient tribal sentiment, like the Song of Lamech, Gen. iv, 23, 24; or perpetuate a family oracle, like that on the birth of Esau and Jacob, Gen. xxv, 23; or preserve a popular song, like that sung by the women after David's victory over Goliath 1 Sam. xviii, 7; or be quoted as a current proverb, as in David's answer to King Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv, 13. A great variety of folk sources were thus drawn upon as materials or corroborations of the history.

NOTE. *Recognizable Extracts Listed.* A list of these fragments and remainders to the end of David's reign is here copied from Geden's Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, p. 264.

"The chief of these songs or poetical extracts, contained in the first eight books of the Hebrew Bible, are as follows:

(1) Gen. iv, 23, 24. Song of Lamech.

(2) Gen. ix, 25–27. Noah's Curse on Canaan, and Blessing on Japheth.

(3) Gen. xxvii, 27–29. Isaac's Blessing of Jacob.

(4) Gen. xxvii, 39, 40. Isaac's Blessing of Esau.

(5) Gen. xlix, 2–27. Jacob's Prophecy of the Future of his Sons.

(6) Exod. xv, 1–18, 21. Song at the Red Sea of Moses and the Children of Israel, and of Miriam.

(7) Exod. xx, 2–17. The Ten Words, cp. Deut. v, 6–21.

(8) Num. x, 35, 36. Words for the Taking up and Setting down of the Ark.

(9) Num. xxi, 14, 15. Song of the Valley.

(10) Num. xxi, 17, 18. Song of the Well.

(11) Num. xxi, 27–30. Satire on the Fall of Heshbon.

(12) Num. xxiii, 7–10, 18–24; xxiv, 3–9, 15–24. Oracles of Balaam, the Son of Beor.

(13) Deut. xxvii, 15–26. Curses of the Law.

(14) Deut. xxxii, 1–43. Song of Moses.

(15) Deut. xxxiii, 2–29. Blessing of Moses.

(16) Josh. x, 12, 13. Adjuration of Sun and Moon at Gibeon and the Valley of Aijalon.

(17) Judg. v. Song of Deborah and Barak.

(18) Judg. ix, 8–15. Jotham's Fable of the Trees and their King.

(19) Judg. xiv, 14, 18; xv, 16. Samson's Riddle and Sayings.

(20) 1 Sam. ii, 1–10. Hannah's Prayer.

(21) 1 Sam. xviii, 7; xxi, 11. Celebration by the Women of David's Prowess.

(22) 2 Sam. i, 19–27. David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan.

(23) 2 Sam. iii, 33, 34. Elegy on the Death of Abner.

(24) 2 Sam. xxii. David's Song of Deliverance; cp. Psa. xviii.

(25) 2 Sam. xxiii, 1–7. Last Words of David."

The poetic language of a nation is in general more archaic in expression than the idiom of common speech and intercourse; partly because archaism promotes the imaginative mood of poetry, and partly because the more

ancient usages created a norm for poetic expression. The literary passages quoted in the Bible as ancient bear the marks of their archaic character. Their words and phraseology, their grammar and syntax, their sentiment, all bear witness to their relative antiquity; and thus these scraps of poetry and proverb have the interest of being the utterance of the oldest human experiences known to us.

Age and Setting

NOTE. In his "Introduction to the Hebrew Bible," p. 263, Professor Geden says: "In the lyrics of the books of the Old Testament, the more or less fragmentary songs, elegies, poetical outpourings of natural emotion and feeling, will be found the oldest literary expressions of Hebrew thought. With this conclusion the facts of language, both in regard to grammar and syntax, are in entire conformity. It is in these pieces that the language presents itself under its most archaic form; and they appear to betray in many instances the effects of a longer period of transmission, and even of later misunderstanding and attempts at repair and restoration, than do the books in general in which they are embedded. The origin and date of some of these are determined by the circumstances which they commemorate; of others the source is entirely obscure. All that can be said of them is that they are certainly ancient. The text, moreover, is often difficult to interpret, and probably impaired."

A noteworthy feature of these quotations is their fidelity to their setting. They never have the effect of being lugged in to enhance the literary beauty or interest of the history; they spring naturally out of the context as if they were made for the place. Thus they enliven the history by preserving intimate personal touches, as from the presence of the event itself. From the series of them one could construct a fair idea of the spirit of early times and its progress from rude and savage passions to a degree of refinement close to the milder graces of civilization. This may be felt by comparing the oldest extract in the above-given list, the Song of Lamech, with its brutal glorification of blood revenge, and some of the latest, like David's elegy over Saul

and Jonathan, and his tender last words. These literary fragments and remainders thus subtend a large arc of human refinement and progress, before the expression of thought had become self-conscious and artistic.

It is not to be concluded, however, that all of these quoted passages are so much more ancient than their context as to be contemporary with their event or situation. We have to allow for the liberty which ancient historians freely took of inventing or imagining speeches for their characters; a custom which we see exemplified in the case of Thucydides. The Hebrew historians doubtless exercised the same creative freedom. Some extracts are preserved unchanged, with the marks of their antiquity upon them; some may be the composition of the historian himself; and in many cases the quotation may be a repair or enlargement of ancient fragments. In many cases, too, the quotation, though more ancient than the historian's time, may not be *so* ancient as the event to which it relates; for other writers may have given their version of it, which the final historian found to his hand.

NOTE. "That these passages," says Professor Geden ("Introduction to the Hebrew Bible," p. 265), "are not all of equal or even great antiquity is written patently upon the face of them. Some may even be no older than the prose and narrative setting in which they are found. All of them, however, deserve careful study at the hands of those who would understand the nature and growth of the Hebrew language and literature."

II

The Native Mold of Literary Form. Both from the fragments and remainders that we have noted, and from the narratives in which they are embedded, we can see what is the native genius of the Hebrews for literature, and in what forms it found most spontaneous expression, before the time of written books.

As is true of all nations, the earliest form that was

consciously literary was poetic. It had the intense and elevated diction, the imaginative and figurative tone, and the aptly molded phrase, which are essential to poetry. In the Revised Version much of this, even in the historical books, is printed in lines as poetry; and this helps readers greatly in realizing its poetic quality. It must be noted, however, that poetry loses much by translation into another tongue; and in judging of its quality one must rely less on the form than on the general elevated key of imagination and passion.

In the Poetic Strain

The verse of the Hebrew poetry is not founded, as is modern verse, either on a system of quantitative meter or on a rhyming system. What rhythm can be traced is accentual, and what rhyme occurs is casual or accidental. The verse is composed rather on a unit of parallelism; that is to say, the lines are generally in couplets, in which the second line repeats the structure and in some way the idea of the first. A simple example of this may be seen in what is perhaps the oldest verse in the Bible, the song of Lamech (Gen. iv, 23, 24); in which the three pairs of lines, and the likeness of idea in each pair, will be noted:

> Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
> Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:
> For I have slain a man for wounding me,
> And a young man for bruising me:
> If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
> Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

This exhibits the verse unit in primitive simplicity; being a song in synonymous couplets or parallelisms. A variety of relations, however, may exist between the coupled lines. They may be virtually synonymous, saying nearly the same thing twice; as in the song just quoted, and in the following couplet from Deborah:

> Why is his chariot so long in coming?
> Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

Or the second line may give the obverse or contrast to the first; as in the following from the Book of Proverbs:

> Righteousness exalteth a nation;
> But sin is a reproach to any people (xiv, 34).

Or the second line may intensify and enlarge upon the first; as in the following, also from Proverbs:

> He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches,
> And knoweth not that want shall come upon him (xxviii, 22).

In any case the verse is a kind of thought-rhyme; thoughts instead of sounds being paired together and aided by similarity of structure. This is its essential unit, which is apparent however the verse is refined by cultivation. It developed indeed an accentual measure of its own; but the minuter study of this belongs rather to the original than to a translation.

The historical books, with their frequent quotation of more primitive material, furnish good occasion to note the native forms most congenial to the Hebrew mind. Of these forms in the poetic strain we may here distinguish the two that spring naturally from the opposite moods of joy and grief; namely, the song and the elegy or lament.

1. The Song

The Song (*shir*), represented in numerous fragments and by such complete examples as the songs of Miriam and Deborah, is in every nation the most spontaneous and natural utterance of the higher sentiments and emotions. Rising out of the common occasions of life, like birth and marriage, and out of the inspiring events, like help in fellowship and victory in war, it perpetuates the wholesome spirit of family and communal life from age to age. It is the best literary form for oral transmission, its versified structure being favorable to preservation unaltered, and its accompaniment of music or chanting giving it at once elevation and popular currency.

NOTE. The oldest Hebrew songs that we have show already a high degree of poetic and constructive skill, indicating that in this

kind of literature the Israelites, when we first make contemporary contact with their mind, were well advanced in the sense of poetic values. As the historians were concerned with public and religious matters, they would naturally not retain songs of a private or family nature; but Gen. xxxi, 27, shows that such songs were customary, and in Gen. xxiv, 60, we have a poetic blessing pronounced on the occasion of Rebekah's leaving home to marry Isaac:

> Our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of ten thousands,
> And let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.

One Scripture book, The Song of Solomon, preserves a lyric cycle of such nuptial songs. Of songs of thanksgiving over birth one may note Hannah's song, 1 Sam. ii, 1–10, a type reproduced in the Magnificat, Luke i, 46–55. Songs of victory are well illustrated by the chorus of women after David's victory over Goliath, 1 Sam. xviii, 7. Songs of religious worship and praise, both public and private, make up the main body of Hebrew poetry; the Book of Psalms is all composed of such; and later songs occur in the prophecies, for example, Isa. v, 1–7; xii; xxvi, 1–7; Hab. iii; Jonah ii. Moses' song and blessing, Deut. xxxii, xxxiii. David's review song (identical with Psa. xviii) and last words, 2 Sam. xxii, xxiii; and Hezekiah's thanksgiving for recovery from sickness, Isa. xxxviii, 10–20, are of more public and national significance.

2. The Elegy

Occasions of grief, private or public, called forth another lyric type, exemplified by such poems as David's dirge over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i), which he seems to have taught his people to sing. It was distinguished from the song by a class name, *ḳinah*, "lament." The form of the verse, too, is varied, the couplet unit consisting of a long line answered by a shorter one. The first couplet of David's dirge illustrates this feature:

> Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
> How are the mighty fallen!

In David's lament over Abner (2 Sam. iii, 33, 34) we have the fragment of another elegy.

Note. The form of the lament or elegy, rising naturally out of bereavement or calamity, was cultivated to a high state of development in later times. In 2 Chronicles xxxv, 25, the national lament over King

Josiah is thus narrated: "And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day; and they made them an ordinance in Israel: and behold, they are written in the lamentations." Jeremiah, in xxii, 18, denies the honor of a public lamentation to King Jehoiakim: "They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!" A whole Scripture book, the Lamentations, is made up of elegies composed on the occasion of the fall of Jerusalem; and these are still chanted at the Jews' Wailing Place at the foot of the old Temple wall.

In the Prose Mood

With all its emotional intensity, finding expression in poetry, the Hebrew mind was eminently matter-of-fact and practical; and this made the prose vehicle fully as natural a form of expression as the poetic. Much of the poetry, though maintaining the parallelism and workmanship of verse, is hardly distinguishable in feeling from prose. This is especially true of such literature as proverbs; as one can feel from such a specimen couplet as this:

> He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
> And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,

which is in the didactic mood of prose. The prophecies, which we shall notice later, are as much like oratory as like poetry; they may be best read, indeed, as impassioned prose, with occasional passages in more poetic strain.

Of the forms in prose mood which in the historic books reveal the native genius, we may mention two: the Mashal and the Folk Tale.

3. The Mashal

We leave this word *mashal* untranslated because no one word of our language fully represents it. The mashal was the form of utterance for something especially memorable or weighty, something to be laid to heart or to set one thinking, — in a word, for didactic matter. The word *mashal* is generally translated "proverb" (see, for example, 1 Sam. xxiv, 13), sometimes "parable" (see, for example, Num. xxiii, 7); but both the sententious

form connoted by the one word and the sustained form connoted by the other are incidental, not essential. The word means primarily "likeness," or "comparison"; and refers to that form of presentation in which an illustrative figure, like simile, an illustrative story, like fable, or even a pointed contrast or antithesis, is used to convey a lesson. In the broad sense, it is the kind of literature which employs the principle of analogy; and this, as we shall see, was the Hebrews' unit of reasoning, rather than by premise and conclusion as with the Greeks. As to specific forms, the mashal may designate fables, parables, riddles, maxims, aphorisms; it may be expressed either in prose or in verse. Its tendency is toward as pointed and condensed a style as possible; and when it employs verse it is more for the sake of its point and phrasing than for its emotional or picturing character.

The mashal tended most to the verse form when most directly didactic. It rose out of the kind of utterance most racy of the soil, namely, the folk proverb; see, as an instance, the answer of the outlawed David to King Saul, vindicating himself (1 Sam. xxiv, 13), in which he quotes an ancient folk maxim. For the origin of a proverb see 1 Sam. x, 12. The riddle of Samson and its answer (Judg. xiv, 14, 18) is an example of a verse mashal composed for an occasion:

> Out of the eater came forth food,
> And out of the strong came forth sweetness,

in which one may note the hidden antithesis giving it point. The mashal in verse form was also used for especially important utterances like a prophetic oracle; thus Balaam's oracles given in trance (Num. xxiii, xxiv) are called mashals. Another use of it was as a vehicle of satire, or what is called a taunt song;[1] thus the song of exultation over Heshbon (Num. xxi, 27–30) is attributed to those "who speak in mashals."

[1] Cf. Habakkuk ii, 6: "Shall not all these take up a parable (*mashal*) against him, and a taunting proverb against him?"

The analogy principle of the mashal, however, was used most effectively when it was expressed as a familiarly told tale or apologue, setting forth its lesson in an indirectly didactic way, as a case analogous to the one to be taught. A fine example of this kind of prose mashal is Jotham's fable, Judg. ix, 8–15, in which the trees are represented as talking together and choosing a king. The use of a parable as a delicate means of conveying reproof is illustrated by Nathan's parable, 2 Sam. xii, 1–4, and the wise woman of Tekoa's fictitious story, 2 Sam. xiv; in both of which instances King David, pronouncing judgment on a hypothetical case, is made to pass adverse judgment on himself. The answer of King Jehoash to King Amaziah about a proposed gage of battle, 2 Kings xiv, 8–10, is a prose mashal used as a weapon of sarcasm.

NOTE. *Later Developments.* All these are taken from the early historical books, as examples of the pre-literary mashal; but like the song, the mashal was later taken up and cultivated to a very artistic form of literature. The Book of Proverbs (*m'shalim*) is a collection of mashals of a specific type, the Solomonic mashal, which was the most condensed and finished of all. The last discourses of Job (see xxvii, 1 and xxix, 1), which are called mashals, present the verse in a more flowing and continuous form. The sage Ecclesiastes made it his occupation to compile, compose, and arrange mashals, both prose and poetic (Eccl. xii, 9). The parables of Jesus may be regarded as the most charming as well as the most matured form of the mashal.

4. The Folk Tale

As a reflection of the Hebrew mind not only the literary quotations embedded in the history but the history itself is to be reckoned with; and indeed this history embodies, especially from Judges through 2 Samuel, the most intimate product, the nearest to the people's common life, of the ages before books. For its groundwork is essentially folk story, such as grows immediately out of the event, with its atmosphere of folk customs, relations, ideas. Though gathered later into a continuous history, with a framework of chronology, connecting links,

and elucidative comment, these folk tales still retain the color and raciness of their oral origin, and are doubtless a true reflection of the history as it essentially was. Thus all that is vivid and moving in the history comes down to us straight from concrete experience. In this sense, then, we can read the bulk of the early history as contemporary literature. It is folk tale, such as comes from the camp, the home, and the city-gate; shaped and pruned and tempered by long oral transmission, but also reflecting a native genius for simple and telling narration.

NOTES. 1. *The Native Genius for Narration.* Some remarks of Professor Sanday, in "The Life of Christ in Recent Research," p. 15, are as applicable to Old Testament narrative as to New: "Where the Hebrew historian is writing of events that are still fresh in men's memory, and where he is drawing upon good contemporary sources, he is an excellent narrator. There is no redundance of language, no straining after effect, no obscurity of detail, and yet the human feeling of the story, the pathos and the tragedy, come out of themselves in a way that is strangely moving. It is like the simple, dignified, reserved, and yet expressive speech that seems natural to the East, and that in the Bible always has the religious sense behind it."

2. *The Oral Standard of Narrative.* That the type of Biblical narrative was set by the oral or folk tale, may be seen from the following, about the gospel story, from Professor Hill, "Introduction to the Life of Christ," p. 26: "At the outset the story was, of course, wholly oral. The presence of eye-witnesses obviated the necessity of resorting to written documents; and, moreover, the Jews shared the Oriental feeling, that religious truth ought to pass from teacher to learner by word of mouth and not by writing. All the great mass of the Talmud was for generations handed down orally, and its final reduction to writing was opposed by many. And the same preference for oral teaching is expressed by Papias, a Christian of the second century, when speaking of learning about Christ's life: 'I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice.' Such oral accounts of what Jesus said and did would have a more or less stereotyped form, partly because any account often repeated grows stereotyped in form, and still more because the tenacious Oriental memory reproduces exactly whatever has been delivered to it."

Of the Bible history as a completed whole, a future chapter is the place to speak.[1] We are dealing here merely with an important component element: the current or traditional folk tales which were so intimately woven with it as to impart to it their own prevailing tone. These stories are of course Oriental in color, reflecting the imaginative intensity of the Semitic mind. As compared with other Oriental stories, however, like for instance the Arabian Nights, they are singularly free from the fantastic or grotesque, are simple and sane, and use the utmost economy of detail to get the essentials of the story told. There seems to have been, as far back as we can trace, a steadying influence at work at the core of the people's life, which kept their thought and imagination poised and realistic. It is by virtue of such qualities that the men and events of so small a nation and so remote a time have become more memorable, and have added more to the moral and spiritual outfit of the ages, than any other men and events in the world.

III

Avails and Deficits of the Pre-Literary Times. It will be noted that while we have traced the quoted fragments of poetry from prehistoric times, we have not pushed the folk tale back beyond the Book of Judges. The stories of Genesis and of the experience in the Wilderness do not belong so truly to the folk tale; they are legends gathered by scholars and teachers and containing more of the interpretative and symbolical; the time to speak of them is later. Meanwhile, in the general tone of the folk tale, the rude heroism and adventure, the savage elemental passions, the primitive customs, the undeveloped religion not unmixed with superstition, of a people just emerging from nomadism

[1] See Looking Before and After, Chapter III, I.

to a settled and organized life, are faithfully reproduced. As we go on from the times of the Judges through the two books of Samuel this folk-tale coloring enables us to realize the gradual refinement of the people's customs and ideas, as they gain a surer hold on land and religion and reach more civilized conditions in life: a period coinciding with the gradual fusion of tribal and clannish elements into national unity, and the establishment of monarchy under the first two kings, Saul and David.

Heroic and Personal Stimulus

We have put the historic period from Joshua to Solomon before the age of books, not because there was no written literature in that period, but because literature in any finished or efficient form was not a felt element of life and culture. The literary ages, with the diffused sense of literary values, came later. Meanwhile, in those primitive social conditions, the great moving and educative power among men was the power of masterful personality. In the men of mind and achievement who, born and reared among them and sharing in their common lot, emerged to distinction as warriors, judges, and seers, the people recognized not only their natural masters but the personal ideal to which insensibly their lives conformed. This was the primal source of Israel's early morals and enlightenment, the unspoken pattern of human worth and honor.

A characteristic trait, accordingly, of these pre-literary ages is that they are rich in personality, especially in strong and rough-hewn characters; men like all others limited and faulty, but with strong convictions and deeds to their credit which endow them with influence. Instead of books and diffused ideas, such as we have, these heroic times had among them such real embodiments of faith and character as Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, David; each in his way infusing some personal light and stimulus into the common life of the people.

NOTE. Two or three instances of this personal ascendancy, out of many, may be cited, to show how dependent the people were upon it and how responsive to it. Gideon's boldness in breaking down the altar of Baal and setting up an altar to Jehovah in its place (Judg. vi, 25–32) changed the religious allegiance of the people and earned him a name and leadership. The incident of the people's rescue of Jonathan from the death he had incurred for his unwitting violation of a taboo (1 Sam. xiv, 45) is an indication of his extraordinary hold on the people's affection, a passion which overrode a deep-seated religious feeling. The whole life of David as an outlaw, his magnanimity toward the jealous king, his generous treatment of foes, his enforced Robin Hood rôle (see especially 1 Sam. xxii, 1, 2), is a telling example of what a lovable and generous personality may do to tame and ennoble the crude passions of men.

Need beyond Personal Ascendancy

What a people can get from personal contact and influence is after all only as great as the person; and the person, however distinguished in some ways, is at best only a step in advance of his time. Besides, too, without a sincere conscience or a fixed standard of principle, personal ascendancy is as apt to be degrading as elevating. If there may be a Gideon, strong in rugged faith, there may also be an Abimelech, strong only in base self-aggrandizement; and Gideon himself, after his victories in the pure worship of Jehovah, may lapse into a subtle and corrupting idolatry (see Judg. viii, 24–27). The defect in mere personal ascendancy is well illustrated by the downward trend of the nation, in spite of the occasional faith and valor of the Judges, during the period from the death of Joshua to Samuel. Of the sad depth that the nation by Samuel's time had reached the Biblical description is: "The word of Jehovah was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision" (1 Sam. iii, 1; cf. Prov. xxix, 18); while of a somewhat earlier time the repeated description is: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. xvii, 6; xxi, 25). There was lack of a common enlightenment and steadying power in the mind of the people.

NOTE. The following sketch of that time of deterioration is given by Principal Miller, in "The Least of All Lands," p. 215:

"The history from Joshua to Samuel is one of continual and steady degradation. It is relieved, no doubt, by bursts of faith and valor; but, so far as our scanty materials enable us to judge, each outburst when it came found the people in a more hopeless state than the one before it. And, speaking roughly, each of them was in itself a meaner and weaker thing than its predecessor. Gideon may have been greater than Barak, but there is reason to believe that he elevated the character and purposes of the people less. And with the great names that come after Gideon's, the falling-off is manifest and great. Jephthah was little more than a rough freebooter in whom such faith in the God of his fathers as he had could scarcely struggle into half-formed shape. And the deeds of Samson are those of one on whom a higher mood came rarely and whose faith could never embody itself in steady purpose. Such as they were, his deeds did not touch the popular heart or rouse the energy even of his own tribe. With those who fought for Israel in the days of Eli, the lowest depth is reached. In the weak old man himself, there was still some spark of devotion to Jehovah and his cause; but, from all around him, the last relics of reverence and noble purpose and moral life were gone.[1] On the fatal day, when the glory departed and the ark of God was taken, the Israel that drew its life from Shiloh fell as completely as Saxon England had fallen when Duke William's meal was spread in the place of slaughter at nightfall of the day of Saint Calixtus."

This suggests what is needed beyond the prowess or ascendancy of personal leaders. It is what is here called *vision*: that insight into life and truth beyond the impulse or passion of the moment, that educated conscience and sincere homage to the ideal, which the primitive people depended on their prophets to impart, but which we get through our heritage of literature. For the true and solid progress of mankind there must be evolved a body of literary instruction; a fund of ideas, tested, authoritative, inspiring, comprehensive, which shall be the property of all, and whose power will work in the common mind when the masterful personage is not present or after he is dead. Such literature traces indeed to personal sources. But to

[1] 1 Sam. ii, 17, 22.

the power of the person, who with all his greatness may be capricious or inconsistent or one-sided, must be added the steadying and enlightening power of ideas.

NOTE. On the need beyond personal ascendancy, Professor Gardiner remarks, in "Exploratio Evangelica," p. 5: "It is true that in the presence of a mighty spirit and leader of men, his direct commands may be taken as principles of action, and not expressed in terms of the intellect. But in ordinary times, and among thoughtful men, religious doctrine is as necessary to the healthy and normal development of a community as are faith and self-denial."

From Personal to Biblical

Our survey of the times before the age of books has revealed literature as it were in the germ: the song, the mashal, the elegy, the folk tale, all like a run-wild oral utterance. It is significant, however, that later, when the specific lines of literature are gathered into a permanent canon — law, prophecy, poetry — all are attributed to personal sources of this period. To Moses is ascribed the beginnings of law, to Samuel the beginnings of prophecy and statesmanship, to David the beginnings of lyric religious poetry. One more great name, that of Solomon, is connected with a literary type, the mashal or wisdom type; and his activity immediately succeeds to this period of the Semina Litterarum. Thus the great centers of literary light and influence are recognized as personal; but their personality is translated into abiding ideas.

CHAPTER II

AWAKING OF THE LITERARY SENSE

[Under the reign of Solomon, 970–933 B.C.]

THE founding of the Temple, in the fourth year of King Solomon's reign (1 Kings vi, 1) was deemed by the Scripture historians to mark an important date in the nation's life: important both for the period that it closed and for the new order then opening. The number of years after the deliverance from Egypt was carefully noted, as if that closing period had its own meaning. The year of the king's reign, and the month, are noted with equal care, as if the event thus dated were an epoch for all time. When a nation can thus begin to number its years, and to set off periods of its history, its existence is beginning to show meaning and promise; it has an organic idea.

The religious import of the building of the Temple is obvious. The central worship of Israel, hitherto held in a tent, was now established in a permanent building. Here then was the religious capital of the nation: a center for the standard service and instruction, and a point of pilgrimage for the various annual feasts. But because religion in ancient times was never dissociated from civic, social, and business affairs, the import of this event for the nation's secular life was equally great. The Temple, in fact, was only one of a whole group of public buildings, which included not only the palace of the king but an extensive series of halls, courts, and porches, for civic administration and judgment. As time went on it became the central place for

banking and business, for schools and tribunals, for archives and libraries. The distinctive national life, in short, was concentrated here.[1]

I. The Quickened National Self-Consciousness

The founding of the Temple is but one of many signs of the times indicating the birth of national self-consciousness among the scattered tribes, with the pride and patriotism corresponding. At this epochal point, with a feeling of rest, security, and realized hope, the Hebrew people could look back over the twelve generations of almost constant war and unsettledness, and of the gradual fusion of rival and turbulent tribes; until now Israel had become a united nation, with a definite standing among the nations of the earth.

The Larger Civic Scale

During the reign of Solomon the Israelites and their tributary peoples covered the largest expanse of territory the state ever controlled (1 Kings iv, 20, 21). As the reign was mainly one of peace, there was opportunity for domestic upbuilding and prosperity; and this showed itself especially in the king's extensive enterprises in building, which just for the Temple and the royal palace occupied a period of twenty years. To promote this industry, much of which was carried on by forced labor, and to provide for the lavish wants of the court, the kingdom was organized on an elaborate scale; in which the tribal divisions, inherited from more primitive times, were discarded from the machinery of government, and an organization more arbitrary and despotic took their place. To obtain materials for building, alliance was made with the neighboring kingdom of Tyre, in which were situated the celebrated forests of Lebanon. King Solomon also made commercial ventures on his own account; even to the extent of a navy of ships and a port on the Red Sea (1 Kings ix, 26), and a partnership in the Phœnician trade with Tartessus in Spain (1 Kings x, 22).

[1] G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," Vol. I, pp. 352 ff., 365.

With all this energy in government and commerce Solomon had also a disposition for display and luxury. His temper was that of the Oriental despot; sagacious indeed, and not willfully tyrannical, but self-indulgent and extravagant, to a degree that cost his kingdom dear. One thing, however, his reign did, in spite of the despotism it maintained and the hardships it caused: it raised the nation, hitherto absorbed in local and clannish affairs, to a broader plane of civilization, where they became aware of a world's interests and business. This brought its new sphere of relations and ideas.

Reflection in the Popular Mind

The whole tone of the history of Solomon's time, as we have this in the books of Kings and Chronicles (1 Kings iv–x; 2 Chron. i–ix), strongly reflects the feeling of childlike wonder and zest with which the people, to whom such splendors and luxuries as Solomon's were strange and new, contemplated the more spacious order of things. His wisdom, his wealth, his regal display, his magnificent undertakings in architecture and trade, are told in such superlatives as indicate that the teller was not to the manner born. No other personage in Israel's history, in fact, is surrounded by such an atmosphere of legend and fancy as is King Solomon. The Scripture account, indeed, is sober in comparison with the marvels of many Oriental tales, supernatural and magical, that are told of him; but the heightened tone of the Scripture accounts themselves indicates that his memory lives in Israel's kindled imagination as his father David's memory lives in their affections.

All this indicates that under Solomon the people entered for the first time upon a stage of national life and civilization wherein their native genius was adapted to act freely and expand. The nomadic and pastoral life of the wilderness, or a life purely agricultural and rustic such as they had hitherto lived in Canaan, was not their most congenial

element. Their true field of development lay in a social and urban type of civilization: a life which opened into prosperous enterprise, business undertakings, the gain and care of wealth, intercourse and commerce with the world. And when they had surmounted their primitive conditions, and found themselves on the threshold of this kind of life, it was like awaking to a new world of thought and imagination.

Such awakening naturally finds outlet in expression wherein this attitude of mind has free and creative play. Accordingly, it is to this age that we trace the people's quickened response to a more liberal range of utterance and to literary values as such. We perceive it in the way the native literary forms pass from a run-wild and artless stage to a stage of self-conscious and disciplined cultivation. We perceive it too in the way the more dominating types of literature begin to be developed.

II. Initiative in Two Gifted Kings

Not only was the people of Israel responding to a new type and stage of civilization. Personal influence and ascendancy too was at its highest and wholesomest. Out of the times succeeding the chaotic era of the Judges had come names of strong personalities, whose power survived to tone up the people's mind: Samuel, the venerable last judge and king-maker; Saul, the ill-fated first king and military champion; Jonathan, the brave and chivalrous crown prince untimely slain; David, who as popular hero even in outlawry and forced exile showed his essential nobility and magnanimity of character, and in his succession to royalty not only established a capital and religious center but built himself into men's hearts in a love which condoned his faults; Joab, whose able generalship went far to atone for his hard arbitrariness of nature; and finally Solomon, whose sagacity and

organizing vigor so captivated the people's imagination that they were well pleased, for a time, to submit their national pace to his scale of Oriental luxury and splendor. Never afterward in their history did the tide of personal ascendancy rise so high.

Of these great names two stand out preëminent in this period for the impulse they gave to literature. They are the names of the two kings, father and son, David and Solomon. Each of these was in his way generously endowed with literary gifts; and each is identified in tradition with a type of the more artistic and developed literature. In tradition, I say, rather than in history; for their actual work, if any of it is extant, is buried in the work of later generations. It is important therefore to note what historical warrant there is, if any, for ascribing to them so eminent a place in the nation's roll of authorship.

I

David's Part in the Literary Awakening. As a minstrel and singer, endowed with the gift both of poetry and of music, David was already famous in youth. It was he, it will be remembered, who was sent for to charm away the melancholic spirit of King Saul by his harp-playing (1 Sam. xvi, 14–23). He is mentioned by the prophet Amos in connection with the musical instruments used in secular feasts (Amos vi, 5); and the instruments used in the orchestral service of the Temple in King Hezekiah's time were called "instruments of David" (2 Chron. xxix, 26, 27; cf. 1 Chron. xxiii, 5). These references would indicate that his chief distinction was as an inventor and maker of stringed instruments. In the poem ascribed to him as his "last words," however, he is described as

> The anointed of the God of Jacob,
> And the sweet psalmist of Israel;

or, more literally, "the joy of the songs of Israel," where the word for songs is the specific term for songs set to music.

Of undoubted poetic compositions from his hand we have the famous lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i, 19–27), and a shorter one over Abner (2 Sam. iii, 33, 34), to show that he cultivated the form of song called the *ḳinah*, or elegy. Besides these there are ascribed to him a song of thanksgiving (2 Sam. xxii), composed when his kingdom was securely established, — the same poem being repeated as one of the Psalms (Psa. xviii); and an ode called "the last words of David" (2 Sam. xxiii, 1–7), in which latter the aged monarch passes in devout and grateful review the experiences of his reign.

King David's chief literary distinction, however, consists in the fact that tradition has made him the father of Israel's sacred lyric poetry. A whole scripture book, the Book of Psalms, though containing many poems ascribed to other authors, is named for him as founder and originator. As completely compiled, it appears as the anthem book for the temple services; and to the individual Psalms are appended many titles, or labels, relating to their authorship, their musical use, their class as poems, and their historical occasion. Of the one hundred and fifty Psalms contained in the book seventy-three are ascribed to David. It is to be remembered, however, that these titles are later additions to the text, representing the conclusions of compilers long after David's time; and we do not know what warrant these had for attributing the poems to David. We are to remember also that these Psalms, as they were used for liturgical purposes, were subject like our hymns to revision and adaptation to later conditions. The conjecture, therefore, just what or how many of the Psalms are of David's actual composition, is hazardous. At the same time, the appended titles, while not to be trusted implicitly, are not to be too lightly dismissed. They represent at least a very old tradition.

The Book of Psalms as a gradually compiled and eventually completed collection will come up for consideration later.[1] Our concern here is with David's relation to it, which as we shall see was larger than that of mere authorship and musical genius.

II

Solomon's Relation to Literature. Although Solomon is known to history as the builder of the Temple and so as the organizer of a centralized state worship, his personal influence was not distinctively religious. Nor was he, as his father had been, a man of war. He was on the one side a man of the world, interested in civic, industrial, and commercial affairs, and on the other side, a man of liberal artistic and literary tastes. It was in these directions that he gave a new and powerful impulse to the progress of the Israelite state. When he began to reign over them the people were clannish and provincial; he worked to infuse into them something of a cosmopolitan sense, and to give them self-confidence and self-respect as a nation.

Solomon's love of display and luxury, which is such a striking feature of his reign, was only a surface trait, like the untempered tastes of the new-rich. Nor was his despotism so much a disposition as a careless aping of the ways of other Oriental monarchs. The inherent quality for which succeeding ages have known and honored him is his wisdom. In the popular account of his reign, as reflected in the narratives of 1 Kings, this is set forth by the story of his dream request at Gibeon and its answer (1 Kings iii, 4–15); by a specimen example of his acuteness and sagacity as a magistrate (1 Kings iii, 16–28); and by his cleverness in answering the hard questions of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings x, 1–10). Such things would

[1] See Chapter V, I, III, "Treasures from the Older Literature," and Chapter VIII, II, 1, "The Five Books of Psalms."

take the fancy, as they still do, of a people not yet schooled to literature. But beyond this also, there is introduced into the story of his reign an element the like of which we do not see under any other monarch, except to some degree under Hezekiah. From the enthusiastic account in 1 Kings iv, 29–34, we see that his court was not only a center of wealth and luxury but of keen intellectual activity. Stimulated by the brilliant versatility of the young king, the men of rank and position began to cultivate literature for its own sake, and with regard not only to its substance but its artistry. Their work was, in its primitive way, something like the vigorous intellectual activity of the court sonneteers and euphuists of Queen Elizabeth's time. Of the extraordinary literary vigor of Solomon's reign the king himself was the promoter and patron, surpassing the cleverest men of letters in their own field. He spoke, it is said, three thousand proverbs or mashals; and his songs were one thousand and five. The sources from which he drew his lessons of wisdom are indicated: the realm of animal and vegetable nature, which suggested to him a wealth of spiritual analogies. The principle of the mashal, as we will recall, is likeness or analogy; and here not natural science but the definite search for such lessons is meant. It was like the occupation of the Duke in Shakespeare's play, who with his companions in cultured leisure is curious to

> Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones and good in everything.[1]

It is from what this account indicates, especially, that we deduce our chapter heading, Awaking of the Literary Sense. We trace this awaking to the time and court of King Solomon, and to men of refinement and taste who were ardent in the pursuit of letters and learning to emulate the men of other nations.

[1] "As You Like It," Act II, scene i, 16.

Of literary work that in its present form can be identified as Solomon's there is much less than in the case of David. His speech at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings viii, 12–21), which there is reason to think may have been originally preserved in the Book of Jashar,[1] is likeliest to have been his personal utterance. Two of the Psalms (lxxii, cxxvii) are by title ascribed to him, and the sentiment and subject matter of them are not unfitting to his time; we are to remember, however, that the titles of the Psalms are later than the text and perhaps conjectural.

Two books of Scripture have his name in their titles. They are: "The Proverbs of Solomon the Son of David, King of Israel," and "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." The first of these, however, is confessedly a collection of utterances from various authors and ages; and at Chapter x, 1, the title "The Proverbs of Solomon" is repeated, as if to distinguish his work from that of others. The attribution to Solomon therefore, it would seem, may be meant to express not personal authorship but kind or style; as if in modern terms we should say Solomonic mashals, as distinguished from those of other species. As a matter of fact the mashals thus named are so different from others as to merit that distinguishing term. In the same way the "Song of Songs, which is Solomon's," may designate the highest example of that peculiar species of song the Solomonic; it is certainly very different from any other songs in the Bible. Both these books then, as it would seem, stand as monuments of the literary movement which began with the awaking of the literary sense in Solomon's time; the nature of which movement we have now to consider.

NOTE. *Solomon's Fame and Name in Literature.* Besides the Proverbs and the Song of Songs, which are ascribed to Solomon by name, the Book of Ecclesiastes, or Koheleth, purports, under a symbolic name meaning the "preacher" or "counselor," to give King Solomon's

[1] See above, p. 60, note.

philosophy of life. Its title is, "The Words of the Preacher (Koheleth, Ecclesiastes), the Son of David, King in Jerusalem"; and in the portion from Chapter i, 12, to ii, 26, Solomon's wealth and wisdom, his use of them and its results, are ideally described. In the later times before Christ, when it was a general custom to name books for illustrious personages, one of the apocryphal books, purporting to contain wisdom that came to Solomon in answer to his prayer at Gibeon (cf. Wisdom, vii, 7, 8; ix, 7, 8), is called "The Wisdom of Solomon." There is also a collection of psalms, eighteen in number, compiled only a few decades before Christ, which, on the warrant of titles similar to those of the Davidic Psalms, is called "The Psalms of Solomon."

III. Evolution of Literary Types and Functions

Among the types enumerated in the preceding chapter under "the native mold of literary form," we have mentioned the song and the mashal as especially congenial to the Hebrew mind. These two types were the first to feel the stirring of the new spirit under the favoring conditions of the united kingdom, and the first to be molded and refined from the instinctive to the artistic. Under Solomon a differentiating and specializing process took place; giving rise, in form, to various styles of song and mashal, and in content, to a fine adjustment of each type to its fitting subject matter. The history of this process is obscure because we have only the finished books, published long afterward, to show for it; but of its vigorous beginnings in the inspiring times of Solomon, and of its cultural growth and ripening thereafter, we have no reason to doubt.

In two distinct yet harmonious lines this evolution of the native literary types may be traced, as they become more familiarized in the thought, the worship, and the education of the people. These lines extend respectively from the finer development of the song and the mashal.

I

The Lyric Strain, General and Sacred. The songs and fragments of song that up to the time of Solomon are quoted in the text of the history relate to matters of public import, such as events in the nation's experience or in the lives of eminent men. It is to this fact, indeed, that we owe their preservation at all. To the individual emotions, such as are universal to all, there is less reference. Yet here is the very feeding ground of lyric poetry: the joys and sorrows of the home, the passions and aspirations of the heart, the common experiences of life, secular and sacred. It is to these, rather than to national affairs, that the new lyrical movement seems to have been directed.

Of the Solomonic School

In the account of Solomon's literary versatility in 1 Kings iv, 29–34, we find him not alone but associated with a group of men some of whose names are given, all engaged in occupations of culture and learning. In other words, there is here given a glimpse of a Solomonic school, or fellowship, of which the king himself is the head and patron, sharing in the intellectual pursuits of his subjects. His own songs, the account says, were a thousand and five. It is not likely that he monopolized the lyrical activity; he was merely the leading spirit in a notable movement. Of its further history, or of works traceable to it, we have no subsequent account, except that two of the men here named, Ethan and Heman, are mentioned as the authors of Psalms, Ethan of Psa. lxxxix, and Heman of Psa. lxxxviii, and both are mentioned in 1 Chron. xv, 19, in the list of David's singers. In reading about Solomon's exploits in verse one cannot but recognize something of the amateur and craftsman. His songs were not so truly the lyric passion wreaking itself out of a full heart on life, as they were exercises in lyric art, like the work of an enthusiastic student. They were not of Biblical theme or caliber, and so have not survived.

One specimen remains to us, however, of the work of this Solomonic school, which shows that these courtiers were engaged in something more than elegant trifling. It is the Scripture book entitled "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." We can neither ascribe nor deny it to Solomon himself, nor are there internal marks to determine when it was written; but of the Solomonic school of lyric art it claims by title to be the supreme product. It is a cycle of exquisite love poems, the only Scripture book, indeed, dealing with the theme of sexual mating and love. The cycle has been deemed a kind of masque or drama; but a coherent plot or a consistent situation is hard to trace. There is, however, a noble consistency and beauty in the general spirit and sentiment of the book. Doubts have been expressed as to its fitting place in a Scripture canon; but if the sexual relation, most common and potent of human passions, needs light and guidance from above, surely the Bible has a legitimate mission in dealing with it. And this Song of Solomon deals with the matter in a way not unworthy of Biblical sanction. In reading it we have of course to realize that it comes to us from an Oriental race and land, with its Asiatic imagery and atmosphere, and that its scene is a royal harem. Yet out of this equivocal environment are drawn conceptions of beauty and sanity, which though richly sensuous are not at all sensual or salacious; which portray love as a sacred and spiritual thing, and woman not as the slave or the plaything of man but as an equal mate, who in her native purity and strength can hold her own personality inviolate against courts and kings. Thus we may rank the portrayal with the noblest modern ideals. Solomon had a harem which was his undoing (1 Kings xi, 1–8); Solomon's Song, whose heroine is a simple country girl sturdily loyal to her virgin love, makes the harem seem a base and paltry thing. And its net impression, refined by the matured lyric art, is that of a pure,

faithful, resolute love, on which lust and luxury have no power. Such a theme, which later times selected as the crowning lyric product of the Solomonic school, vindicates the high mission of literature, as it sets itself to put into order and beauty the common values of life.

Of the Davidic Influence

In the literary activity of Solomon and his court we have seen how poetry was cultivated by the higher and more cultured classes, and in what social and secular stratum of sentiment it moved. But for the people of all classes, with their common moral and religious needs, the field was already preëmpted by the influence of David's poetical and musical gifts, and still more by the perpetuated power of his personality. According to the compiler of the Books of Chronicles it was David who, as soon as he had brought up the ark from its wanderings to his newly won capital, organized the sanctuary ritual mainly as a service of song with orchestral accompaniment (1 Chron. xvi, 4–7), and who later conformed this organization by anticipation to the Temple which his son Solomon was to build (1 Chron. xxv, 1–7). This account may be, as to details, the notion of a later historian read back into the past; but what seems certain is that the soul of the Temple service, its spirit of worship and praise and confession, was a heritage not from Solomon the builder, whose tastes were quite other, but from his father David, the real founder of popular and centralized worship. In other words, the prevailing strain of the lyric art in Israel, deriving from the devout personality of David, was laid out on religious aspirations and themes. And the outcome is before us in the Book of Psalms, which from gradual growth into the hymn book of the Israelites has become, and beyond all other books remains, the hymn book of the world.

Though in a narrow critical sense we cannot ascribe individual Psalms with absolute certainty to David, in a more real and vital sense his personal stamp is upon the whole

psalm type. To him beyond any other person we owe it that song was turned into the religious channel, and that it became the utterance of the personal religious life. Thus from the beginning of the worship on Zion these Psalms were the main factor to make worship a thing of the heart rather than of external ritual or of mystic divination. It was a matter of direct individual communion with Jehovah, and available to every common man. And tradition was not slow to recognize the personal source and manner of this lyric strain. This is quite evident in the titles appended to the Psalms. Of the Psalms attributed to him, thirteen are by title associated with particular events in his life, and eight of these with incidents in his early experience of enforced outlawry, when his personality came in closest touch with the people. In general too, in the transition that was taking place from a fierce and warlike age to an age of peace and prosperity, this power of personality made David one of the most refining and civilizing agencies that the history of Israel ever knew. He became the kingly type to which the later Hebrew imagination reverted, and on which was modeled the Messiah idea; an idea which derives both from the man and from the spirit of the poetry of which he was the pioneer cultivator. His molding power over the mind and heart of his nation thus anticipated the truth of Fletcher of Saltoun's remark: "I knew a very wise man that believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

The Personal Keynote

NOTE. *Davidic Psalms with Historical Headings.* The following Psalms, all ascribed to David, are referred by the later added titles to events of his life, mostly verifiable from the history:

Psalm iii. "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son." Cf. 2 Sam. xv, 13–18.

Psalm vii. "Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto Jehovah concerning the words of Cush a Benjamite."

Psalm xviii. "A Psalm of David the servant of Jehovah, who spake unto Jehovah the words of this song in the day that Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul." Cf. 2 Sam. xxii.

Psalm xxx. "A Psalm; a Song at the dedication of the house; a Psalm of David."

Psalm xxxiv. "A Psalm of David; when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed." Cf. 1 Sam. xxi, 10–15. (Achish in 1 Sam.)

Psalm li. "A Psalm of David; when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba." Cf. 2 Sam. xii, 1–15.

Psalm lii. "Maschil of David: when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech." Cf. 1 Sam. xxii, 9.

Psalm liv. "Maschil of David: when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?" Cf. 1 Sam. xxiii, 19.

Psalm lvi. "A Psalm of David: Michtam: when the Philistines took him in Gath." Cf. 1 Sam. xxi, 10, 11.

Psalm lvii. "A Psalm of David: Michtam: when he fled from Saul, in the cave." Cf. 1 Sam. xxii, 1.

Psalm lix. "A Psalm of David: Michtam: when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him." Cf. 1 Sam. xix, 11.

Psalm lx. "Michtam of David, to teach: when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand." Cf. 2 Sam. viii, 3, 13.

Psalm lxiii. A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

Psalm cxlii. "Maschil of David, when he was in the cave; a Prayer." Cf. 1 Sam. xxii, 1; xxiv, 3.

The Permanent and Universal Elements

A word about the permanent values of the Psalms may here be added. The collection has been called, too restrictedly I think, "the anthem-book of the second Temple," — that is, of the Temple built after the Jews' return from the Chaldean exile. Rather, we may call it the sacred lyric accompaniment of the Hebrew life, both personal and national, from the time that David set up the tabernacle in Jerusalem till a century and a half before Christ. A deposit from all the ages of Israelite worship, these Psalms rise many times out of special events or occasions; but they contain permanent

elements which make them equally fitting when the specific occasion is forgotten. Or else the occasion, literal to begin with, becomes in course of time symbolic or allegorical; so that succeeding generations can apply it as naturally to their own inner experience as if the concrete event had befallen them. It is the Hebrew poets' recognition of the truth enunciated by Goethe:

Alles Vergängliche
Iſt nur ein Gleichniß.

Thus the Psalms have done more than any other literature of the Bible to make the history of Israel symbolic, as if it were a divinely composed allegory or object lesson; nor that only, but to create the whole religious dialect of succeeding ages in terms of Hebrew thought and feeling. The lyrical genius of the psalmists converted the local and temporal situations of their experience into universal religious values.

NOTE. *Psalm Occasions.* In this adaptation of particular occasions to devotional uses, partly because the poet had not the occasion but the lesson at heart, and partly because the psalms were subject to later revisions, the occasions became so disguised that it is hard to identify them beyond doubt. Among the more likely ones we may instance: Psalm xxiii, which seems a reminiscence of David's youth and days of war; Psalm xxiv, which seems to celebrate the bringing of the Ark either to Mount Zion, whither David transported it, or to Solomon's Temple; Psalm xlvi, which seems to have been composed on the occasion of building an aqueduct in the time of Hezekiah to conduct water into the city for time of siege; Psalm cxxiv, which seems to celebrate the wonderful escape of Jerusalem from capture by Sennacherib; and Psalm cxxxvii, which comes from the experience of the exiles in Babylon. In all these cases the Psalm is expressed in terms not merely of local but of such universal experience as all worshipers can avail themselves of and make their own.

II

The Wisdom Strain, and the Sages. It was not the cultivation of the lyric that gave Solomon his chief claim to literary distinction, but the development of the mashal from the crude

form of the popular maxim or parable to a highly finished verse form, which was in course of time made the vehicle of a whole strain of didactic literature, called by later scholars the Wisdom literature.[1] Of this strain of literature the Book of Proverbs, which as we have seen is associated with Solomon, is the most typical product. In addition to this book the matured literature of Wisdom contains the Books of Job and Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew canon, and in the Apocrypha the Book of Jesus Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon. All this literary strain we may regard as the current of thought and instruction rising out of the cultivation of the mashal and initiated by Solomon and the sages of his court.

The sages do not seem to have been an official order, as were priests and prophets; and it was only the king's participation in their work that gave them such immediate distinction and popularity. The practical usefulness of their work, however, was soon recognized as an educative factor. In course of time we may regard the cultivators of Wisdom as essentially schoolmasters and counselors, especially of the young; men of age and ripe experience, who sat in the city gates and gave counsel in sententious precepts and figures, and who were revered for what they were rather than for their official station. By the prophet Ezekiel they are called "ancients" or "elders" (Ezek. vii, 26). An idealized portrayal of the venerable sage is drawn by Job, in his description of himself as he was before his affliction (Job xxix, 7–25). The sages came eventually to be recognized as a kind of order or guild, coördinate in the national cultural agencies with priests and prophets. We see this indicated in a verse of Jeremiah, where the three orders with their functions are mentioned. "The law," say the men of Israel, "shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the

[1] For the mashal as represented in the native mold of literary form see above, pp. 64–72.

word from the prophet" (Jer. xviii, 18). To the wise, or sages, is thus attributed specifically the giving of counsel; a function inherited in later history by the scribes and rabbis.

The word "wisdom" means to the Hebrew much like the word "philosophy" to us. It was, however, philosophy of a quite different kind from ours, as befits the different national and racial aptitude. It was not speculative or metaphysical, nor was it expressed in trains of reasoning. Uttered in the form of maxims or aphorisms, it concerned itself with matters of practical sagacity and conduct: precepts for the management of life, with its everyday duties of industry, purity, temperance, prudence, open-mindedness, wisdom of speech and silence, and the like. It did not argue, it asserted; and its subject matter was such as could be affirmed without gainsaying. It was, in a word, the didactic literature of Israel; and from the time of Solomon to Hezekiah we may regard it as the chief vehicle of education for the youth and the common people of the land. In the preface to the Book of Proverbs its object and audience are thus set forth:

Wisdom as to Substance

> To know wisdom and instruction;
> To discern the words of understanding;
> To receive instruction in wise dealing,
> In righteousness and justice and equity;
> To give prudence to the simple [*or* immature],
> To the young man knowledge and discretion:
> That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning;
> And that the man of understanding may attain unto sound counsels:
> To understand a proverb, and a figure [*or*, an interpretation],
> The words of the wise, and their dark sayings [*or* riddles] (i, 2–6).

All this reflects its practical and in the good sense worldly fiber. It was indeed the primitive gospel of success, expressed in terms of this world's conditions and affairs, and without professing to be, as prophecy avowed itself, a revelation from God.

In its devotion, however, to the principles which avail in social and industrial life, Wisdom never cut loose from or ignored religion. Its beginning, or positive principle, was taken as the fear of Jehovah, or, as we should say, reverence (Prov. i, 7); its principle of negation, departing from evil (Job xxviii, 28). Thus it identified Wisdom values squarely with religious. To be wise was the same as to be righteous; to be wicked was to be a fool. The unscrupulous cleverness or crookedness which grasps at immediate success is a delusion:

> There is a way which seemeth right unto a man;
> But the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. xiv, 12; xvi, 25).

The wealth that one gains in dishonest ways has no life value; the true guaranty of life is righteousness:

> Treasures of wickedness profit nothing;
> But righteousness delivereth from death (Prov. x, 2).

It is not on superficial or opportunist motives that this philosophy of life is founded, but on the permanent elements of character; not on acuteness of intellect alone but on loyalty to conscience:

> There are many devices in a man's heart;
> But the counsel of Jehovah, that shall stand (Prov. xix, 21).

Through this practical moralizing on the active principles of life it came about that the ideal of righteousness, of strict loyalty to conscience, was ingrained in the Hebrew mind as its distinctive bent. We distinguish its racial genius by that; just as beauty and clear thinking distinguished the Greeks, and order and system the Romans. The Hebrew education, as this body of the proverb literature reveals, was an education in conscience and practical good sense.

As to form, the utterances of Hebrew Wisdom do not mind the distinctions that we draw between proverbs, parables, fables, allegories, apologues, and the like. All are alike mashals; all use in some way the principle of comparison

or analogy; and the term "mashal" covers a range from the most condensed maxim to a flowing and continuous line of narrative, like the parables of Jesus. The element common to them is their didactic purpose, and their elucidation of spiritual truths by material facts and objects, or, as in the antithetic proverbs, of one spiritual truth by another.

Wisdom as to Form

The main distinction of the Solomonic mashals, as to form, seems to be that they are detached lessons, not making up a system or continuity but each complete in itself; expressed generally in the couplet, and not often extending beyond a quatrain. As the Wisdom literature becomes more developed and mature, however, there is a tendency to make the lesson longer, more flowing and more continuous; in other words, to give more amplification and elucidation to the thought, while still the couplet remains the verse unit. It is thus that from detached counsels on life Wisdom in course of time becomes a coördinated philosophy. This is seen especially in the books of Job and Ecclesiastes, which are written in the non-Solomonic or continuous mashal. How this differs from the Solomonic can be seen in several passages outside the Book of Proverbs; for example, Balaam's oracles (Num. xxiii, xxiv); Job's discourses (Job xxvii, xxix); and two of the Psalms (Psa. xlix, lxxviii). Isaiah also composed a passage in the later mashal form (Isa. xxviii, 23–29). It was about in his time, probably, that the Wisdom literature was in greatest vogue among all classes of the people.

CHAPTER III

LOOKING BEFORE AND AFTER

[Under the early kings of Judah and Israel, until cir. 783 B.C.]

FROM the death of Solomon, which occurred about 940 B.C., to the so-called literary prophets, about 754 B.C., a period of nearly two centuries, the people of Israel were undergoing politically the varying fortunes of the two rival kingdoms into which the nation split as soon as Solomon's son Rehoboam came to the throne. The immediate occasion of the disruption was ascribed to Rehoboam's insolent determination to perpetuate the despotic rule of his father (1 Kings xii, 1–15); but conditions were ripe for it, and it had been foreseen and sanctioned by prophecy while Solomon was yet alive (1 Kings xi, 26–40).

This political separation was in fact only the culmination of a rivalry which had from early times existed between southern and northern Israel; a rivalry which centered in the two strongest tribes, Judah and Ephraim. Each of these tribes accordingly became the nucleus of a kingdom. The kingdom of Judah, or the southern kingdom, inherited the capital Jerusalem, the Temple with its religious traditions and worship, and the kingly dynasty from the heroic times of David. The kingdom of Ephraim, or the northern kingdom, was set up anew, with a capital shifting until Omri built Samaria; with the worship not centralized at the capital but carried on at various high places or local shrines, of which Bethel and Dan were the chief; and with the royal dynasty frequently changed, generally by usurpation and assassination.

NOTES. 1. *The Capitals of the Northern Kingdom.* Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, chose Shechem (now Nablous) for his capital (1 Kings xii, 25), a town not well situated for fortification or defense. A later king, Baasha, who came to the kingdom by usurpation, began to build Ramah as a frontier capital against Judah (1 Kings xv, 17), but on an invasion from Syria left off building Ramah and dwelt in Tirzah (1 Kings xv, 21). This continued to be the capital until Omri built Samaria, which remained the capital until the kingdom was broken up (1 Kings xvi, 24).

2. *The Centers of Worship.* Jeroboam, on coming to the northern kingdom, soon perceived that it would not do to let his people go up to Jerusalem for pilgrimage and worship; so he caused images to be made and set up shrines at Bethel and Dan, at the south and the north of his kingdom, and also established centers of worship at other places (1 Kings xii, 28–31). The corruptions of worship that came to characterize these places are denounced in Amos iv, 4.

Of these two kingdoms Judah, retaining only two of the twelve tribes (1 Kings xi, 36) together with the priestly tribe of Levi, was the weaker in numbers and power, but the more organized and stable, retaining its autonomy nearly a century and a half longer; its religious culture, too, being more centralized, was more defined and homogeneous. Ephraim, the northern kingdom, taking the general name of the kingdom of Israel, and comprising ten of the twelve tribes, was stronger and more prosperous in wealth and agriculture and trade, having in fact a much more fertile and attractive territory; but more exposed to the evils of foreign invasion, in closer contact with the idolatrous Canaanites, and in general of looser moral and religious character.

I. ONE PEOPLE IN TWO KINGDOMS

When, after the secession of the northern tribes, Rehoboam was minded to force them back by war, the word of a prophet came to him: "Thus saith Jehovah, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is of

me" (1 Kings xii, 24). A similar intimation of Jehovah's purpose had been given to Jeroboam, the first ruler of the northern kingdom, while Solomon was yet living (1 Kings xi, 29–37). The political separation of the kingdoms was evidently of Jehovah's design: he had a larger mission and destiny for the Hebrew race than men could plan or see. But while the kingdoms were two states, often in rivalry and war with each other, they continued to be one people: one in the consciousness of ancestry and origin; one in tribal affiliation; one in religion and sense of the claims of righteousness. Their disunion was in fact only superficial, confined to matters of state polity and perhaps of religious orthodoxy; while in all vital things they had not only the sense of brotherhood but of communal unlikeness to all the nations round about them. On this homogeneous character the prophets and sages could reckon; to it they could appeal in matters of history and motive and destiny.

I

Traits and Tendencies in the Two. The two centuries from the literary awakening in Solomon's time until the literary prophets begin their work may be regarded as a kind of melting-pot era, during which the racial and religious idea is fused and shaped into a general consciousness of the nation's place in history and the world. The period coincides with the existence of the two kingdoms as unviolated states; while each can realize its national idea and character, and before the shadow of invasion and overthrow comes upon it from the east. During this time the race's character and conscience are forming. The two kingdoms are becoming aware of the claims of their history upon them: their ancestral faith, their peculiar heritage of ideas, their noble roll of patriarchs and leaders, their God Jehovah and his intimate relations with them. All this is fostered by unnamed men of leading among them, sages

and teachers, whose work appears in the historical books from Genesis to Kings. Their literary activity during this period is thus in the way of racial and religious self-interpretation; running back to times far beyond the beginnings of their political history, and down to spiritual depths beyond the reach of time and custom.

When therefore toward the end of Israel's monarchical period the literary prophets began their work, they could appeal to a familiar fund of historical knowledge on the part of the people. The people's native aptitude for the parable and the folk tale had been well educated. They had come to know their history with its meanings so well that it could be relied upon as an incitement to conscience and a motive power in conduct.

NOTE. The prophets are full of allusions to events of early history, not only the great outstanding events but the smaller ones, as well known; showing that the people had been well instructed. One may instance, almost at random, Amos's reference to the conquest of the Amorites made by Joshua, Amos ii, 9 (cf. Josh. x, 12); Hosea's reference to the destroyed cities Admah and Zeboiim, Hos. xi, 8 (cf. Gen. xiv, 8); Micah's reference to Balaam, Mic. vi, 5 (cf. Num. xxii–xxiv); Isaiah's reference to campaigns by David and Joshua, Isa. xxviii, 21 (cf. 2 Sam. v, 20; Josh. x, 12).

To this self-interpretation both kingdoms had contributed; and the resulting historical literature is a composite product. It is of some importance therefore to note how each of the two sections of Palestine was adapted to contribute its distinctive strain.

Of the two rival kingdoms thus existing in close connection, the northern one, the kingdom of Israel, was in all worldly respects the stronger. It comprised all the more fertile and populous parts of Palestine: the country around Shechem and Samaria, the fertile plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, the region around the Sea of Galilee and northward, and the fine agricultural plateau

The Northern Kingdom

of Gilead beyond the Jordan. The people's pursuits were mainly agricultural; and the common folk life was that of contented and prosperous farmers. All this tended to produce a sturdy and sterling type of civilization, but not a very high standard of religious culture.

There were other conditions, however, not so favorable to the homogeneous life thus connoted. The northern kingdom was in immediate contact with the neighbor kingdoms of Syria and Phœnicia; with which realms it was in constant relations of war or intimate alliance. It was thus more in the current of the world's civilization, and tending to conform itself to the world's standards of worship and polity. The great caravan routes, too, between the two centers of empire Egypt and Assyria, passing through the midst of Israel, brought the chances of trade to their doors, and furnished scope to the native Hebrew genius for business. All this, while it increased the nation's wealth, tended to produce luxury and arrogance, and those distinctions of classes wherein the rich could tyrannize over the poor and reduce them to virtual slavery; a condition which the frequent disastrous wars aggravated. As is always the case, the higher civilization, along with its blessings, brought also its evils and vices; and with these the nation's men of letters must reckon.

The Southern Kingdom

The weaker kingdom of Judah, occupying the rugged hill-country from a few miles north of Jerusalem southward to Hebron and Beersheba, the slopes of the foothills westward toward the Plain of Sharon and the Philistine country, and the wilderness eastward toward Jericho, Jordan, and the Dead Sea, had a land that could be made productive only by constant and wisely directed toil; a land fitted mostly for the cultivation of the grape and the olive, and for the care of flocks. Thus the type of its civilization, apart from the capital, was rather pastoral than agricultural. Life was lived on a smaller and simpler

scale than in the northern kingdom. Society, however, was more homogeneous, the fiber of the people's mind more narrow and intense, the national character more tenacious and hardy. Their hill-country was in a sense their protection from the agitations of the outer world. It was not so accessible nor so much coveted by enemies; and as long as the northern kingdom survived, Judah had this as a kind of buffer state between it and the great invading kingdoms.

II

Resultant Literary Situation. The literary awaking under Solomon, with the immediate impulse it gave to the cultivation of poetry and proverb, was not confined to these lines of literary culture. It was felt in every activity, and not least in the form which would make use of the native genius for narration, namely, the historical. It is to the ages while the two kingdoms existed side by side — more specifically the ninth century B.C. — that we trace the transition from folk tales of heroism and adventure to motived and prophetic history, such as we now read in Genesis to Joshua. For this the times, with their great personal achievements so recent, furnished a positive inspiration. In the nation's evident guidance under Jehovah the men of insight felt that it had both a history and a hope worth recounting and cherishing. The two kingdoms were alike in this. With the same ancestry, the same God, and the same moral consciousness, they continued to think alike on all essential things; and law, wisdom, and prophecy would be equally valid and binding for both.

Lines of Cleavage

In the tone and standard of religious culture, however, there were differences between the two kingdoms; whose effects we shall see in the utterances of the literary prophets, but which may be felt also in the composite historical literature tracing its component elements to this period.

The southern kingdom, Judah, was the natural leader and pace setter in religious ideals. It had the city which David had made the metropolis of all Israel; it had the Temple which Solomon had built, with the ancient ark of the covenant, and the organized priesthood and worship; it had the royal dynasty of the Davidic house, on which had been pronounced the blessing and promise of Jehovah. It was in Judah, accordingly, that the racial and religious idea was evolved in greatest unity and purity; in Judah that it would tend more to crystallize into the permanence and authority of a matured literature. At the same time, if Judah had a purer type of religious culture, it was apt to be more intense and narrow, and so more intolerant and exclusive. Its influence would make rather for literary depth than breadth.

The religion of the northern kingdom, Israel, was of a looser and more liberal type: less resolved to prescriptive tenets; more open to the influence of heathen idolatries, especially from the allied kingdom of Phœnicia, and to the moral corruptions inherent in the Canaanite nature worship with which the people were in immediate contact. At the same time it was more tolerant and broad in its sympathies, less austere and exacting; it doubtless learned good as well as evil from its neighbor religions. Religion in Israel was much more primitive than in Judah. Its standards of law and worship were less defined. Even as late as the time of Elijah it had to decide between the claims of Jehovah and Baal (1 Kings xviii, 21); and even to Elijah the idea that God would communicate with man by an audible voice instead of by some portent of nature was a discovery (1 Kings xix, 11–13). All this left the nation's character less deeply guarded against corrupting and debasing influences; and the national disintegration came earlier and more easily than in the kingdom of Judah.

With this literary situation in mind, we are now to trace

the rise of the historical writing, and along with it the prophetic activity of the two centuries preceding the work of the literary prophets. This is what is meant by the heading of our chapter: Looking Before and After.

II. Looking Before — Beginnings of Historical Writing

We have already noted the fragments and remainders of primitive literature embedded in the first eight books of the Bible: pieces and passages from which we have deduced the native literary forms. Among these latter was reckoned the folk story; which, copiously represented in the completed history, doubtless preserves much that was nearly contemporary with the events it narrates.[1] We now take up the question of the history itself: not yet with reference to its complete and fully articulated form, but more especially to note the order and stages in which it seems to have been written, and some things about the resultant character of it.

Order of Historical Composition. The order in which the events of history were compiled and written does not correspond with the order in which they took place. It is more nearly the reverse. The earliest events, especially of primitive and prehistoric times, might well have been among the latest recounted. The selection and interpretation of them implies a maturity of historical reflection, which connotes an established and enlightened stage of society. The process of finding this order of composition is like tracing the history back, step by step, to its underlying causes and motives; which factors can only be understood as the effects have developed to a riper degree of religion and civilization.

[1] See above, p. 70.

We will trace this order of historical composition in three stages.

1. The Events Nearest at Hand

Historical writing in this period would naturally begin with the events that were most vivid and stirring in the people's mind, and with the great personalities through whom the nation had reached distinction. These events would belong to the times of Solomon and David and Saul, the three great leaders of the united kingdom. In all the stories relating to these, and especially in those relating to David, there is a zest and freshness of treatment, an intimacy of human feeling, a sense of the moving elements of personality, which betoken that the history was written while the memory of these great men was still an inspiring and molding power in the nation. We have seen how this personal influence and inwardness are reflected in the Davidic Psalms;[1] in the annals that make up a large part of 1 Samuel and all of 2 Samuel it is still more so. The substance of the account is too near its events to have become staled with age or literary formalism.

It is in connection with the reign of David that the Chronicler, who in a later century wrote an ecclesiastical history of Judah, begins to name the persons who wrote the annals from which he derived his facts. As authorities for this period (1 Chron. xxix, 29) he names Samuel the seer, Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer. Samuel could not have contributed much to the biography of David, for he died while David was an outlaw fleeing from the fury of King Saul (1 Sam. xxv, 1); but for the life of Saul, and for the obscure period between the Judges and the Kings, Samuel might well have been a principal authority. It would seem, then, that these stories of the early and united kingdom drew least from floating tradition; nor did they, like the history of the reigns succeeding Solomon's,

[1] See above, p. 82.

base themselves on court and temple archives. Their source was personal reminiscence and interpretation, by men endowed with prophetic insight. For the annals of Solomon's reign there is a curious blending of historical styles, indicating, to my mind, the somewhat unpracticed historian. We have noted, on the one hand, the tone of childlike wonder in which the wisdom and wealth and splendor of Solomon are described;[1] on the other, we note such a tendency to accumulate details and statistics of affairs of administration and building and trade as one sees on the inscribed monuments of the Assyrian and Chaldean monarchs. It is like a combination of earlier and later historical methods; when dependence on oral and folk tradition is passing into dependence on documentary sources, and when the ascendancy of the personal is passing.

2. The Ages of the Tribal Heroes

Going back along the stream of time, the next histories to be compiled would be the stories of the Judges, and of the times of hardship and heroism during which the tribes were gaining a foothold in the land, becoming united in sentiment and worship, and advancing from anarchy to a degree of comity and tribal organization. In these histories the compilers would avail themselves of the folk tales that had gathered round the tribal heroes of old, and of legends that had accumulated at the local sanctuaries and sacred places. It was in these histories too, as we have seen, that fragments of ancient song and parable were incorporated as part of the historian's material. They go back to the times of the deliverance from Egypt; though in the earlier periods, as comprised in the books of Exodus and Numbers, the folk element shades off into a somewhat more legendary strain, of which we shall have later occasion to speak.

The personal character portrayed in these histories of the Judges is such as is natural to a rude state of society.

[1] See above, p. 79.

It is character actuated by simple motives and passions; and in religion cherishing very primitive notions of service and worship. No attempt is made to set up these heroes as models, or to extenuate their faults. Most of the stories come from the central and northern tribes, who in their pioneer state were in close contact with the more settled and prosperous Canaanites. Their chief danger lay in the tendency to absorb heathen customs, and to lose the severer moral tone of the service of Jehovah. Their hope of survival and distinction as a race lay in their maintaining their covenant with Jehovah and being true to their heritage of ideas. All this is faithfully portrayed in the Book of Judges, the memorial of the rugged times before there was a king in Israel, when, as the account says, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. xvii, 6; xxi, 25).

The staple of these stories of the Judges consists of tribal and family traditions, such stories as would be preserved for their heroic interest. Being of the type of folk tale, they retain to a high degree the coloring of contemporary accounts, though to the oral transmission a process of pruning and polishing supervened until they reached a stereotyped form suitable to be carried in memory. When the historians of our age found them, they added little if any literary shaping; they merely arranged them according to their ideas of chronology, and supplied a framework of causes and motives. This framework is a naïve and primitive formula of historic philosophy: given in the simple recurring statement that the Israelites did evil in the sight of Jehovah and were oppressed; and that when they cried to him he raised up champions who delivered them. The early chapters (i–iii) are predominantly of this epitome type. Then, for the body of the book, follow stories of the greater champions, — Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, — told not so much with reference to

strict time succession as with reference to different sections and tribes. Hence it is difficult to construct from them a continuous history. The last four chapters are a kind of appendix giving two episodes of the days of anarchy. One relates the establishment of a sanctuary at Dan in the extreme north of Israel (xvii, xviii). The other gives the story of a certain outrage and feud which resulted in almost the entire extinction of the tribe of Benjamin, and the device, similar to the Roman rape of the Sabines, by which they were enabled to reinstate themselves (xix–xxi).

3. Before the Occupation of Canaan

The first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses, lie before us as a virtually continuous story; giving an account of the creation of the world and of man, of the origin and distribution of the various races of men; then, beginning with Abraham, of the Hebrew race down to the death of Moses. To this modern scholars add as a kind of appendix the Book of Joshua, calling the whole the Hexateuch — this, however, for purposes rather of documentary criticism than of literature.

The story of these primitive times, legendary passing gradually into historic, is told with the skill and moving interest of a people with a native genius for narrative, but also with the didactic feeling of a people to whom religion is the chief concern of life. It is in this way that the coloring and motivation of this primeval history differs from the heroic tales of the Judges and the personal portrayal of the Kings. It has a strain of deeper and more developed religious values; as if the stories were told not so much to give an account of primeval customs and family origins as to make an interpretation of the spiritual development of man. Accordingly there is no book of the Bible that has a richer religious and philosophical import even for modern thinking; though of course this is wrapped in a highly symbolic form. This feature of it becomes more marked

as we get back toward the beginning of things: the stories of Eden, and Cain and Abel, and the Flood, and the Tower of Babel, are like an exposition by narrative of the native spirit of manhood. The stories of the Hebrew patriarchs, succeeding these, are perfectly individualized portrayals, and yet there is much of the type about them, as if they were intended to give the various attributes of the composite character as it develops from the family and religious unit in Abraham.[1]

Into the Pentateuch story as it goes along is incorporated much of a statistical nature. For the history of the patriarchal times this deals with matters of family and race, in the form of genealogies and names connected with race distribution; in the Exodus and wilderness history, with the organization of the tribes, details of the tabernacle, itineraries, and the like. When the story comes to the giving of the law by Moses, not only is the account of it narrated, but the whole code of laws is appended, in several different collections, giving the impression of different strata of legislative development. Besides these collections, in the fifth book (Deuteronomy) much of the law is repeated in the form of public discourses purporting to have been given to the people by Moses just before his death.

II

Two Main Lines of Source Story. It was long held that this Pentateuchal history was written by Moses, and that it was the oldest literature in the Bible. As soon as a more critical judgment is applied, however, it is seen that the history could have assumed its present form and maturity of interpretation only after Israel had reached a much more advanced condition of culture and civilization than they could have had in the primitive nomadic stage of Moses'

[1] See "The Genius of a Race," pp. 31 ff. above.

leadership. The history is in fact composite; its component elements reflecting differences of coloring due to different ages, and to the traditions and thought-habits of different sections of the country.

It was not until after the Chaldean exile that the Pentateuch was completed in its present inclusion and order. Of its component elements there were four main lines, which we will here enumerate: the Jehovistic (J); the Elohistic (E); the Deuteronomic (D); and the Priestly (P). These lines, with some intermediate editing, were skillfully combined by the latest historians, so as to form in the main a continuous narrative. The latter two will come up for mention in their place; we have to deal here merely with the first and second, originating in the early part of the monarchical period now under consideration, and containing the most vigorous and moving elements of the early history.

The oldest stratum of story, and the one that has been used for the narrative basis of the whole patriarchal history, is the so-called Jehovistic (Yahvistic); which embodies, as is generally supposed, the traditions current in the southern kingdom. It seems to have come from about the time of King Jehoshaphat, 874 to 849 B.C. Containing, as a rule, the most charming and limpidly told of the early stories, it has the flow and realistic vigor of the native folk tale, and doubtless derives largely from a still earlier oral source. The depth of its spiritual involvement, however, forbids our attributing it to a purely folk's origin. It must have come from cultivated teachers, who, though speaking in plain and as it were domestic terms, had a deep intuitional sense of human and divine values. The best account of the matter is that these J stories were composed for the catechetical instruction of the common people and the young. In their inception they were educational. The Israelites, as we know, attached

The Jehovistic Source

great importance to instruction of this kind. They were eager that all, from the humblest up, might be familiar with the knowledge of Jehovah and of the great names and events of the past (cf. Exod. xii, 26, 27; xiii, 14; Deut. vi, 6–9; Josh. iv, 21).

Though oldest in point of composition, the Jehovistic line of story does not begin until Genesis ii, 4, where the detailed account of the creation of man begins; the first chapter, from the later priestly source, dealing with the six days of the creation of the world. For two chapters, in designating Deity, it unites the two names Jehovah and Elohim (Authorized Version, LORD God) in one; after that the simple name "Jehovah" is used, though not rigorously. Thus in this Jehovistic source he is recognized as from the beginning the one God of mankind and first worshiped in the time of Adam's third son Seth (Gen. iv, 26); though according to the Elohistic account the name "Jehovah" was not known to Israel until the time of the deliverance from Egypt (Exod. vi, 2, 3). With the predominant use of this name goes a very intimate conception of the relations of Jehovah with men. He is represented as walking with them, talking face to face with them, eating and lodging with them; and his acts, as connected with the creation, the flood, the confusion of tongues, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, are planned and carried out in very human ways. Thus the stories seem to reflect the artless conceptions of early conditions, as these had gradually shaped themselves by oral repetition into stereotyped narrative forms. It is an indication of the later historians' fidelity to their sources, that these stories retain so much of their primitive character, though at the time when the history was compiled and unified the idea of God had grown so much more austere and remote.

As there was a line of story in the southern kingdom, so in the northern; and this was drawn upon by the later

compilers and worked in as a strand in the completed history. It is called Elohistic, from Elohim, the older and more general name of the Deity common to all the Semitic stock, to which name this line of story tended. It embodies traditions of the northern kingdom, as written supposedly about the time of Elisha, or somewhere from 850 to 800 B.C. In the completed history this line of story is not drawn upon so continuously, but rather to fill out and supplement the Jehovistic; this probably because the two lines of story contained mostly identical traditions.

The Elohistic Source

The Elohistic line, which like the other derives from folk tradition, reflects a somewhat different coloring of religious thought; not, however, discordant in principle. Its idea of God is less intimate, as befits a less personal concept of him; he is represented not as friend and companion but as a Being whom men could apprehend only through angels and dreams and oracles. Beginning at Genesis xii, it comprises material from no farther back than the common ancestor Abraham; and from the time of Jacob it deals especially with the history of the northern tribes, giving its honors to those lines of ancestry rather than to the Judaic. The less intimate sense of Deity which characterizes the Elohistic story, and which we feel in the habitual use of the less personal name, may be due to the fact that its idea of God starts from natural forces rather than from human experience. With these two slightly different angles of view, it can be seen that the interweaving of Elohistic and Jehovistic elements enriches rather than distorts the united history. It gives solidity and contour, like the superimposed pictures of a stereoscopic view.

NOTE. *The Two Sources.* The following brief characterization of the J and E documents is quoted from Professor Alexander R. Gordon, in *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. IV, p. 164:

The Jehovistic Source: "It is to this document, *par excellence*, that the Book of Genesis owes its peculiar charm. It is distinguished for its

delicate style and easy rhythmical flow of language, but above all for its delineation of character, and its insight into, and power of expressing, subtle shades of feeling and motives of conduct. It is also suffused throughout with a simple, fresh, and spontaneous religious spirit. Jahveh is near to man. He comes down and walks and talks with him — almost like a brother-man. And the religious life consists essentially in the free, happy, almost visible walk of man with Jahveh."

The Elohistic Source: "This document, while still popular in spirit, is rather more stiff and formal in style. The language shows a distinct tendency to crystallize into literary forms, or mannerisms. The religious tone, too, is more reserved. We have no longer the free, happy walk of Jahveh with man. God dwells in some measure apart from men, and reveals himself, not by open word, but in dreams and by His angel."

III

How these were Supplemented. The data derived from another source, the so-called Priestly, though interpolated much later, may be considered here for the distinctive tone and coloring they impart to the text. It is in the contributions from this source that we feel the formal touch of the historian, as he thinks in terms of written and documentary records, as distinguished from the folk's consciousness thinking in terms of spoken and literary utterance.

The material of this source represents rather the literature composed for permanence and record than that composed for common use and dissemination; it is the original idea of the written as distinguished from the spoken style.[1] Composed under clerical and scribal auspices from the civic and Temple archives, it comprises a supplementary line of data designed to supply the chronological and genealogical backbone of the history; to give statistics, formal details, measurements, and the like; and to incorporate the statutes, civic, sanitary, and ritual, which had to do with the various usages, festival and liturgical, of the sanctuary. Its most distinctive legal section is comprised in the Book of Leviticus,

[1] See above, p. 14.

which in its present form embodies the ecclesiastical code as observed in the second Temple. It reflects the consciousness of the priests and clergy to whom the religion has long been an established and organic system, and at a time when the nation, no longer independent as a state, had only the religious outlet for its thoughts and activities.

Its thought of God is of a Being high and withdrawn from men, whose face none can see and live, and intercourse with whom is only by rites and forms. He is the God of creation and nature and history, rather than of the personal human experience; hence the comparative remoteness and austerity of the character ascribed to him. The general name "Elohim" is used to designate him, until the history reaches the time of the deliverance from Egypt (see Exod. vi, 2, 3), when the distinctive national name "Jehovah" takes its place. The more formal and documentary coloring of this source makes it comparatively easy to distinguish from the more flowing narrative of the rest. Whether any of it is earlier than the Chaldean exile is a matter of dispute; but at any rate its legal parts, as represented in the Book of Leviticus, are thought to be in their present form the work of Ezra the scribe, who came from Babylon to publish the law to the returned exiles at Jerusalem, in 458 B.C. (see Neh. viii, 1–3).

NOTE. The Jehovistic (Jahvistic) narrative, as represented in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, is given by itself, detached from the Priestly, in Gordon, "Early Traditions of Genesis," pp. 233–241; and is followed by a secondary Jehovistic element (J^2), pp. 242–245. The Priestly document is detached and given, in its turn, pp. 245–255.

IV

Treatment of Myth and Legend. The modern way of getting at the origins of things is by study of the evidence furnished by geology, physical geography, climatology, and archæological remains; and of man, by ethnological study

of primitive customs as these exist in rude and uncivilized tribes to-day. The Biblical way is by taking the dim traditions that have floated down by race memory from unknown times and interpreting these according to the historian's sense of human and divine nature. There are race memories as well as individual; and the things that these race memories perpetuate correspond to the stage of maturity which the people have reached when the impression is definite enough to assume meaning and historic or religious import. The race memory is thus analogous to the memory of a child; which retains with great vividness things that come within the scope of child consciousness, and afterward gives them the interpretation which the relatively matured judgment of the adult can commend. The myths and traditions which survive from the infancy of a race cannot be ignored. They must rather be treated as germinal truths and coördinated with the later and riper sense of things.

The Prehistoric Myth

For the account of the primitive ages before Abraham, as given in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, the writers draw upon a store of myths common to the various branches of the Semitic stock, and in part accessible to us through the discovered remains of early Babylonian literature. They reproduce these myths, however, in a kind of literary echo, refining them in the light of their purer religion, and fitting them to the end and purpose of their line of history. Thus the two sources, J and P, the one the earliest, the other the latest, make united use of such of this early material as is essential to their historical scheme. These stories of the creation, of the primeval giants, of the flood, of the dispersion of races, are such survivals from a remote past as any historian must needs reckon with, if only to deny them. The Hebrew historians do not deny them, but give them a more rational meaning; much as we make use of Greek and Scandinavian myths for expository purposes. In other words, into the outworn form,

which fitted a cruder primitive conception, they put new values, corresponding to their juster ideas of divine and human nature.

It seems not unlikely that while the early Jehovistic authors used stories that came in with Abraham, the Priestly source, written near the exile, revised its accounts by fresh reference to Chaldean traditions.

The words "myth" and "mythical," as applied to the pre-Abrahamic stratum of history, require a few words of explanation; being terms that many are reluctant to apply to anything Biblical. "We must keep in mind," says Professor A. R. Gordon,[1] "what myths really are. They are not frauds, nor even conscious inventions. They are simply primitive explanations of the universe — the ideas entertained by primitive peoples of how the world and man came to be. We might call them 'primitive philosophies of nature and religion.' . . . In their essence all myths are religious."

All nations have their peculiar ideas of their relation to God or the gods; which ideas they reduce to the form not of logical demonstration but of story. Rhetorically we may call this process exposition by narration; it is the literary vehicle best adapted to learned and unlearned alike.[2] What coloring these myths take, in any nation, answers to the bent and temperament of the race that adopts or invents them. Thus we find in the Greek myths a distinctive trait of æsthetic beauty; in the Latin myths a cold and unimaginative hardness; an element of wild brute strength in the Scandinavian; of the fantastic and sensuous in the Arabian; and of the magical and cruel, with entire lack of human

[1] In *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. IV, p. 171.

[2] For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.
TENNYSON, "In Memoriam," xxxvi.

reasonableness, in the myths of Assyria and Babylonia. Thus the myths reflect the character and genius of the people, and are shaped by their ideas of deity.

In the hands of the Hebrew historians, who conceived of their God as a person like themselves and of their relations with him as personal and reciprocal, these Semitic race-myths, which even in their developed Babylonian form are monstrous and corrupt, are transformed into symbolic stories in which the magical and fantastic are eliminated, and spiritual truths are involved which the ages since have not discarded or outgrown. Thus the myth takes on the elements of sane and reasonable manhood.

NOTE. *The Use of Myth.* That the ancient and modern literary uses of myths were essentially alike may be seen by the following passages, one from a modern author, the other a reference to the Bible.

1. *Modern Literary Use of a Myth.* Carlyle, speaking of the Scandinavian myths (Hero-Worship, First Lecture), thus sets forth the informing spirit of one of them: "Consider only their primary mythus of the Creation. The Gods, having got the giant Ymer slain, a Giant made by 'warm wind,' and much confused work, out of the conflict of Frost and Fire, — determined on constructing a world with him. His blood made the Sea; his flesh was the Land; the Rocks his bones; of his eyebrows they formed Asgard their God's-dwelling; his skull was the great blue vault of Immensity, and the brains of it became the Clouds. What a Hyper-Brobdingnagian business! Untamed Thought, great, giantlike, enormous; to be tamed in due time into the compact greatness, not giantlike but godlike and stronger than gianthood, of the Shakespeares, the Goethes! — Spiritually as well as bodily these men are our progenitors."

2. *Literary Use of Myth in the Bible.* In Psalm lxxxix, 10, and in Isa. li, 9, there are references to a mythical Rahab or monster-dragon, whom Jehovah slew; and in Job xxvi, 13, the same myth is mentioned. The reference in all the cases is literary; that is, the matter is treated not as history but as we would use a story or situation from Beowulf or Sir Thomas Malory. The whole chapter of Job in which the reference to Rahab occurs is a kind of parody or play on vague mythical elements, given by Job in ironical answer to Bildad; see my "Epic of the Inner Life," pp. 268–271.

Beginning with the illustrious progenitor Abraham and his family, the history from Genesis xii onward is compiled from legends and traditions peculiar to the Abrahamic branch of the Semitic race. As all the tribes of Israel trace to a common ancestry, the Elohistic line of story as well as the Jehovistic begins here to contribute to the narrative.

The Semi-Historic Legend

The name "legend," as well as the name "myth," has offended some, who think that the use of the term throws discredit on the Bible stories. It needs therefore to be explained; and we may quote again from the author referred to above. "As to the real character of the legend," he says, "it is not history in the strict sense, for it cannot claim contemporary witness for its narratives. On the other hand, it is not myth. It is no pure creation of the nation's consciousness, made to explain the universe. It is rather history surrounded with a halo of natural poetry—the traditional history of the nation in the poetic form it has assumed after passing for centuries through the fresh, creative national spirit. And this is really the reason why the stories of Genesis are so lifelike. For legendary figures always appear strikingly lifelike, often more so than strictly historical figures."[1]

"It is an accepted datum of scientific historians," the author further says, "that legend, as distinguished from myth, always contains a nucleus of historical fact." This may confidently be said of the stories of the patriarchs in Genesis, though we cannot separate the nucleus of literal fact from the legendary accretion. In narrating the lives of the great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the historians have imparted to their account all the realism of biography, setting forth good and bad traits, strength and weakness alike; with no attempt to make the character heroic, or to palliate faults. At the same time, however,

[1] A. R. Gordon, in *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. IV, p. 175.

there is a strong typical or symbolic element in the portrayal; as if the person, besides being a historic individual, were an embodiment of the race's collective character in some specific relation. Thus Abraham is a personal embodiment of faith, the fundamental Hebrew motive power; Isaac of the peaceful herdsman and pastoral proprietor, content in home and household; Jacob-Israel, in his double nature the most masterly portrayal in existence of the typical Israelite, with his genius alike for the worldly and the spiritual; Joseph, of the Hebrew as a man of authority and efficiency. It is as if the writers who portrayed these great figures of tradition were not only drawing on ancient facts but molding them unconsciously in their racial image. They were rounding out the legend by creating men after their inner ideal, and thus giving them a function in the prophetic destiny of the chosen race.[1]

A notable feature of these Genesis legends, evincing the keen historic sense of the Hebrew writers, is found in the stories which give the origin of the various nations and tribes related to the Hebrews. Some of these accounts are given in bald catalogue form; as for instance the remarkable list of the descendants of Noah's sons in Genesis x, and the list of the descendants of Esau, or Edom, in Genesis xxxvi. Others, giving the origin of the Ishmaelites or Arabians (Gen. xvi; xxi, 8–21) and the origin of the Moabites and Ammonites (Gen. xix, 30–38), are given in the moving form of narrative. It is in these narratives, especially, that the affinity of the legend to history is evident.

III. Looking After — Beginnings of Literary Prophecy

In all the early stories which the Hebrew historians gathered from antiquity there is a strong prophetic strain; or as we might call it, a sense of tendency and purpose.

[1] See above, p. 33. For the legend, cf. further below, p. 280.

This sense, in fact, inhered with the genius for history and its meanings which, as we have noted, was distinctive of the Hebrew mind.[1] Even the primitive Jehovistic stories — of the loss of Eden, of Cain and Abel, of Noah's survival of the Flood — are as truly prophecies as histories, containing as they do elements of promise and outlook toward a high destiny for mankind. This prophetic strain becomes increasingly marked, alike in the J and the E sources, after Abraham has made his great venture of faith and founded a family in the hope of becoming, through his posterity, a light and blessing to all the nations of the earth.

It is this sense of future destinies which differentiates the Hebrew line of story from the myths and legends of other nations. Instead of a confused and motiveless past, such as these other legends reflect, the Hebrew historian deals with the "dark backward and abysm of time" as with a history of which he possesses the secret; and so those early myths, so odd and childish by other standards, become luminous and reasonable as links in a chain of prophetic progress. All this contributes to make the Bible, from beginning to end, the most forward-looking book in the world. "These people have a secret," writes Matthew Arnold of the Hebrews; "they have discerned the way the world was going, and therefore they have prevailed."

I

Oracles Tribal and Racial. This prophetic strain is enhanced by numerous passages of early literature, in the form of poetic oracles, which we find incorporated at the fitting places in the text of the history. These, tracing back to the primitive times when the family was the social unit, embody the hopes and presages connected with the promise made to Abraham and confirmed in increasingly specific terms to

[1] See above, pp. 37, 38.

his posterity. They relate to the destiny of families, clans, tribes, and the whole nation; recording, as it were, the state of the prophetic consciousness at the time and in the circumstances purported by them. It is uncertain how far these oracles are actually the words of the persons to whom they are attributed. In their present form they are probably later; but at all events they are earlier than the completed text in which they occur, being incorporated from some ancient source. It is in such oracles as these that formal and articulated prophecy begins; and by these it is represented until the time of the literary prophets.

Examples may be seen in the oracle given at the birth of Esau and Jacob (Gen. xxv, 23); the blessings pronounced later by their father Isaac on Jacob and Esau (Gen. xxvii, 27–29, 39, 40); the blessing pronounced by Jacob on his posterity when his sons had become the heads of clans (Gen. xlix, 2–27); and the blessing pronounced by Moses on the tribes when they, as constituent elements of a nation, were about to enter the promised land (Deut. xxxiii). All these are prophecies from the heart of the Hebrew people, embodying its sacred consciousness of the calling and destiny appointed for the heirs of Abraham's faith, as far as could be realized in that stage of their development.

A Testimonial from Without

The most remarkable example, perhaps, of such early prophecy, remarkable because coming from a seer of alien race and religion, is seen in the oracles of Balaam, with the accompanying episode of history, in Numbers xxii to xxiv. These verses (mashals they are called) predict in glowing terms the mission and fortunes of Israel, as seen by one to whom against his desire is vouchsafed a vision from Jehovah concerning this rival and hated people. Balaam has been hired to curse Israel; but in spite of all his efforts he can only pronounce a blessing:

How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?
And how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not defied? . . .
Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations. . .
Jehovah his God is with him,
And the shout of a king is among them. . .
I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not nigh;
There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,
And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,
And shall smite through the corners of Moab,
And break down all the sons of tumult.

Incidentally this strange Balaam episode reveals the relatively crude conception that heathen nations had of the nature of a Deity, and of the way to deal with his mind and will. For Balaam and the king Balak who has hired him to voodoo a nation find to their dismay that the God of that nation is one who cannot be bought, who cannot be fooled, who cannot be changed.

God is not a man, that he should lie,
Neither the son of man, that he should repent.

This idea of the changeless self-consistency of God became, so to say, the axiom on which real prophecy, as distinguished from divination, was founded. Divination thought of the divine will as something to be managed or bent to human purposes. Prophecy identified it rather with the most steadfast element of character, removing it thus from caprice or arbitrariness. It was a lesson only gradually learned, and by some costly experiences. In Saul's time, when the king would play fast and loose with God's bidding, Samuel had to tell him, almost in the words of Balaam, "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent" (1 Sam. xv, 29).

The oracles of this ancient seer Balaam, purporting to come from the eve of their entrance upon the land of

Canaan, must have had great influence upon the subsequent hopes and principles of Israel. The story of Balaam was to late time one of the best known of their early traditions, and was used by later prophets as a warning and monition.

NOTE. The following are the places in Scripture where the story of Balaam is referred to: Deut. xxiii, 4, 5; Josh. xxiv, 9, 10; Neh. xiii, 2; Mic. vi, 5; 2 Pet. ii, 15; Jude 11. The Old Testament passages commemorate the turning of the curse into a blessing; the New Testament passages condemn the prophet rather for "loving the wages of wrong-doing."

II

Evolution of the Prophetic Order. In a general sense the prophet, or seer, was a familiar figure from earliest times. Moses, the nation's great founder and lawgiver, was called a prophet (Deut. xxxiv, 10), and predicted the coming of a successor like himself (Deut. xviii, 15); Deborah, who acted as champion and magistrate in Israel, was a prophetess (Judg. iv, 4); and soon after her time the visit of an unnamed prophet is mentioned (Judg. vi, 8), who bids the people not to fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land they dwell.

The father of prophecy in its more distinctive sense, however, was Samuel, whose activities as judge, counselor, and king-maker were of great importance to Israel. It was through the influence of his stern yet sterling personality that the people were prepared to drop their tribal jealousies and become an organized state; it was by him also that the original constitution of the monarchy was determined (1 Sam. x, 25). He was reared as an acolyte in the temple at Shiloh, having been consecrated to the priesthood by his mother (1 Sam. i, 24; ii, 18, 19). While he was yet a child, and at a time when prophetic vision was rare (1 Sam. iii, 1), he received divine communications predicting the doom of the corrupt priesthood (1 Sam. iii, 10–14); and as a young man he was

The Primitive Beginnings: Personal

honored throughout Israel as a prophet of Jehovah (1 Sam. iii, 19–iv, 1). We next read of him as counseling the people against taking up with strange gods (1 Sam. vii, 3, 4), and as interceding for them in their weakness against the Philistines (1 Sam. vii, 5–14). Not much more is told of him until he was an old man; but it would seem that after the temple at Shiloh was broken up, so that there was no longer a main center for worship, sacrifice, and oracle, he made journeys about the land, ministering both as priest and prophet at various local sanctuaries in turn, Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and his own birthplace Ramah (1 Sam. vii, 15–17); and thus he spent a long and useful life of judgeship.

He seems also to have been instrumental in forming, or at least sanctioning, bands of prophets, who perhaps dwelt at the various sanctuaries and went about the country like modern dervishes (1 Sam. x, 5, 6, 10, 11); he himself, however, was not identified with them. In the actions of these roving bands we get the most primitive idea of prophetic communication with supernatural powers. They seem to have induced a kind of ecstasy by means of music, and in that hypnotic state to have uttered emotional ejaculations which according to primitive ideas were supposed to be the voice of the deity within. They were probably disciples of Samuel, and like him zealous for the religious and patriotic welfare; but not having his breadth and poise of character, their emotions in their ill-disciplined personality got beyond the control of intellect and will, and expressed themselves in odd and unintelligible ways. Such phenomena are apt to occur in all primitive religions, and are by no means unknown in uncultivated communities in modern times. They represent a primal stage in the development of prophetic gifts, before prophecy had become so amenable to reason and intellect as to express itself in ordered literary utterance. Such trancelike performances were not

The Primitive Beginnings: Communal

received with favor by the matter-of-fact Israelites. Joshua would have suppressed an outbreak of prophecy in the camp in the wilderness; but Moses, from his deeper spiritual insight, was more tolerant (Num. xi, 26–30). That they were not highly accounted of in Samuel's time, or received without doubts of their genuine relation to the mind of God, would seem to be indicated by the question asked of these dervish-prophets by a certain sceptic who noted their performance, "And who is their father?" (1 Sam. x, 12). It was in fact instinctively felt from the beginning that prophecy must authenticate itself not only by mysterious tokens but by sanity and reason; and its development was in that direction, with the crude and uncouth gradually disappearing and the thoughtful and self-controlled more evident, until it reached its culmination in the work of the great literary prophets.

Grades of Prophetic Gifts

The prophetic order was a development from an earlier and more primitive institution. In connection with Samuel, who gave it distinctive function and character, the remark was made: "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, 'Come, and let us go to the seer'; for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer" (1 Sam. ix, 9). A seer (*ro'eh*) seems in early times to have been a man who by some means of divination would get signs for future ventures in war, or for the recovery of lost property; receiving for his services a fee. That was the idea that Saul and his servant had of Samuel, when Saul's asses were lost (1 Sam. ix, 6–8). He was regarded as a kind of fortune teller; and such men were numerous in all nations. A somewhat higher class of such interrogators of the future or of the occult went by the name of Gazer (*ḥozeh*). Such were attached to kings' courts as counselors, who by employing some clairvoyant method gave advice for undertakings in war or affairs of state. (See 2 Sam. xxiv, 11.)

Both of these orders, however, seem to have become obsolete, and their methods discredited, with the coming of the true prophet; who was called by a name signifying a "spokesman" (*nabi'*); that is, of Jehovah. In the nabi', or spokesman, the order of prophets first reached the dignity, wisdom, and authority worthy of the high name of prophet. Samuel, whom his contemporaries called the seer, had a personality too great to be measured by divination and fortune telling; and this was so felt by the people that a more honorable name must be given him. "Jehovah was with him," the historian relates, "and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah" (1 Sam. iii, 19, 20).

These different ranks were not sharply discriminated; and more than one kind of prophetic gift might be united in one person. Gad, King David's gazer, also ranked as a prophet or spokesman for Jehovah (2 Sam. xxiv, 11). It is worthy of note that to all the men called prophets in David's time is attributed both statesman and literary activity. Samuel wrote "the manner of the kingdom" in a book (1 Sam. x, 25); and a later historian attributes written annals to Samuel, Nathan, and Gad (1 Chron. xxix, 29). From the time when the name "nabi'" was first given, it would thus seem, the prophetic order was associated with literature.

We speak of the prophetic order, as if there were something official or established about it. And indeed we find accounts of companies of prophets, who were ready for professional employment, and whose words reflected the general level of public opinion or desire, or perhaps the endeavor to please their employers. A remarkable example of this is reported in the prophecies uttered before the kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat before the campaign against Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings xxii, 5–23). This,

however, was not favorable to spokesmanship for One whose "thoughts are not as men's thoughts" (cf. Isa. lv, 8). Accordingly we find that prophets of the highest type, those who have suffered for their message, have not allowed themselves such partnership. They have refused to prophesy for hire or reward, and sometimes have disclaimed professionalism (cf. Amos vii, 12–14; Zech. xiii, 4, 5). This they have done in the conviction that the word of Jehovah through them must be free, and they be beholden to no man. A fee or reward seemed to them like a bribe, and so far forth a restraint upon their conscience. Hence they held themselves independent of kings' courts, or money, or perfunctory duties, that they might be accountable to no one but Jehovah. And many times their reward was martyrdom or imprisonment.

The Prophet's Specific Function

Among the various lines of social and cultural activity in Israel we need to distinguish the specific function tacitly if not officially accorded to the prophets. Theirs was a function independent of the temporary expediencies or vicissitudes of state; unmindful of social conventions or public opinion; claiming justification only by its single-minded fidelity to a larger and more spiritual vision. They were indeed the nation's men of insight and foresight. Their authorizing formula was, "Thus saith Jehovah"; and they must abide the issue of their message, whether one of weal or woe.

This function of the prophets sets them apart from the everyday affairs of the people; which indeed were well cared for. For the ordinary educative work of life, and for the affairs of industry and society, the people had the counsels of their sages, which developed into the Wisdom literature; they had the stories of their popular historians, which we have noted in the Jehovistic and Elohistic strata of the early history; they had the legal decisions of magistrates and priests, which we shall see later codified in a

fund of sacred and statute law; they had the poetry and liturgical services of the Temple and local sanctuaries. With these domestic matters the prophets did not concern themselves, except to keep the people's conscience true to the principles underlying them, as a means to the integrity of their national character and mission. They were rather the men for the care of the large movements, crises, emergencies of the nation; for meeting the crucial points of history and policy, when the issue was between man's way and God's way, and when national faith, honor, and integrity were at stake. In brief, the prophets were the divinely called men by whom Israel's large national movements were interpreted and determined.

Accordingly, we find the earlier prophets appearing when a monarchy was to be set up (1 Sam. x, 17–27); when the royal succession was to be determined (1 Sam. xvi, 1–13; 1 Kings i, 22–30); when a division of the kingdom was decreed (1 Kings xi, 29–39); when the nation's supreme religious allegiance was at stake (1 Kings xviii, 21–39); when dynasties were to be changed (2 Kings viii, 7–15). Thus, it would seem, the specific function of the great prophets was to make known Jehovah's mind concerning Israel's mission and destiny; to correct the tendencies that unfitted the people to meet their future strongly and victoriously; and to enlighten them in the principles that guarantee a noble destiny. All this we may sum up in a word, by saying, the prophets were the enlightened conscience of the nation. They made mistakes, as all men do; and sometimes their policies must bring disaster in immediate results in order to secure a larger and more permanent good. Though at the forefront of affairs, yet after all they were only the next step ahead, themselves undergoing education in Jehovah's word and will, with their spiritual horizon broadening as they went along. On the whole their vision was clear for the portion of the field in

which they worked; they could be sure of the consistent direction of affairs if not of their ultimate goal; and their allegiance to the God whose spokesmen they were was sincere and unbought.

III

Era of Prophetic Masters and Guilds. What is here said of the prophet's specific function applies preëminently to the greater prophets, who represent prophecy in its more momentous import for the future, and of whom only one or two would be active in a generation. By the weight of their message and personality they were natural leaders, "powers behind the throne," with whom both king and people must reckon. Intimately associated with the affairs and policies of the state, they were to a decisive extent determinators of its destiny. Such was Samuel, who, as we have seen, was the father of the prophetic order and the founder of the united kingdom (1 Sam. viii, xii). Such was Nathan, the confirmer of the dynasty to King David (2 Sam. vii), the fearless denouncer of the king in the latter's sad lapse into adultery and treachery (2 Sam. xii, 1–15), and the means of perpetuating the dynasty in the line of Solomon (1 Kings i, 11–31).

To these original leaders may be added, on a somewhat lower plane, Ahijah the Shilonite, who encouraged the revolutionary ambition of Jeroboam I (1 Kings xi, 29–39), and later cut off the succession (1 Kings xiv, 1–18); Jehu the son of Hanani, who prophesied similarly to the wicked King Baasha (1 Kings xvi, 1–4); and Micaiah the son of Imlah, who incurred imprisonment for prophesying truly but unfavorably, in opposition to a company of false prophets (1 Kings xxii, 5–28). These, and more that might be mentioned (e.g. 1 Kings xiii; xx, 35–43), were prophets not for national leadership but for special crises and occasions.

Elijah and Elisha

To Samuel and Nathan, whose work was done in the pre-literary times, fell a large share of that personal ascendancy which, as we have seen,[1] was the natural inspiration and support of the people before the age of books. After the literary awaking under Solomon personal ascendancy does not seem to have counted for so much in the southern kingdom, its place being increasingly taken by the ideas embodied in the songs and proverbs which the psalmists and sages so readily made into an educative agency. In the northern kingdom, however, away from the literary centers, the era of undiffused thought lasted longer, and the need of personal guidance and ascendancy was correspondingly protracted. It was in this kingdom of Israel that most of the early prophetic work was done, and that by the itinerant and personal method which the career of Samuel has made familiar. Among the men who thus worked for the welfare of the northern kingdom, two names stand out preëminent, the names Elijah and Elisha. The stories dealing with them, which begin with the seventeenth chapter of 1 Kings and extend to the thirteenth chapter of 2 Kings, are told in the familiar folk's style, quite differently from the prevailing annalistic accounts in which they are embedded; and probably were derived not from documents but from the oral traditions of the prophetic schools which as we know were a feature of the times.

Each of the two great prophets, whose characters were in quite marked contrast, fitted providentially into his time and mission. Elijah, the stern ascetic, through his services in committing the northern realm at a time of great peril to the exclusive worship of Jehovah, and through his championship of the plain people against the king's arbitrary despotism, became the traditional type of the prophet, Jehovah's

[1] Compare what is said about personal ascendancy, its good, and the lack it leaves; see above, pp. 72–76.

spokesman and herald, later reproduced in John the Baptist (cf. Mal. iv, 5; Matt. xi, 14). Elisha, more a man of the people and less austere, dwelling among them as a person to be consulted by king and common man alike, was a politician-prophet who, though mainly true to high ideals, was not without a certain shiftiness and subtlety in the affairs of state, and indeed was the contriver of the bloody revolution under Jehu which in the end cost the kingdom dear. Of both these prophets miracles are reported; a fact which betokens a relatively raw and unreflective state of society, into which spiritual ideas had found small entrance.

The Sons of the Prophets

In the Hebrew idiom a disciple or follower is called a son. The sons of the prophets were such disciples. They seem to have acted as servants or agents of the greater prophets (cf. 2 Kings ix, 1–3); not giving original prophecies on their own account, but learning the mind of the great seers and propagating their religious and patriotic warnings among the people. We first hear of companies of prophets in the time of Samuel, when they seem to have been connected with the sanctuaries, and to have been in some way under the direction of Samuel (1 Sam. x, 5, 10). The first use of the term "sons of the prophets" occurs in the time of King Ahab (1 Kings xx, 35–43), when a certain one of their number by a symbolic act reproved the king for his clemency in sparing his enemy the king of Syria. At that time they seem to have been a recognized class or guild (cf. 2 Kings ii, 3, 5), like itinerant or cloistered friars, who subsisted probably by the people's alms. We hear most about them in the time of Elisha; when they seem to have lived together in communities of their own (cf. 2 Kings vi, 1–7), to have worn a distinctive badge or mark (cf. 1 Kings xx, 38, 41), or perhaps a monkish costume (cf. Zech. xiii, 4), and to have been cognizant of the great prophets' movements. Wives of such sons of the prophets are mentioned

(cf. 2 Kings iv, 1); so they were not required to be celibates. They were not highly rated by the upper classes (cf. 2 Kings ix, 11); and their primitive ways of inducing the prophetic frenzy fell into disrepute as prophecy took on more the sanity of ordered literary utterance (Jer. xxix, 26; Hos. ix, 7). In the times before prophecy became literary, however, and especially among uncultivated people, the order of the sons of the prophets doubtless served a useful purpose.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRESS OF PROPHECY

[The eighth century till 701 B.C.]

WITH the coming of the literary prophets, of whom the earliest that can be dated was Amos (about 754 B.C.), the unique Hebrew institution of prophecy came to its most distinctive mission, and through a period of about two and a half centuries ran a very significant course in history. The first half century of this time, until 701 B.C., for reasons which will appear, may be regarded as a period of stress, in which prophetic insight and foresight is approaching, for both kingdoms, a great crisis, the crisis of national dissolution and exile. During this period the northern kingdom went under (in 722 B.C.); while Judah, the southern kingdom, was for a time delivered, its exile not coming until 586 B.C., more than a century later. The surviving kingdom, however, did not go unscathed. By the Assyrian encroachments and invasions until 701 it passed through an experience of menace and suspense second only to actual overthrow. It was by a miraculous deliverance that Judah was temporarily relieved and the faith of prophecy vindicated; and the sudden event by which this was brought about ranks as one of the most notable epochs in the nation's history.

This period of prophetic stress we may regard, in the large, as a time during which the strenuous business of the prophets was to prepare both kingdoms for their doom, and for their worthy survival of it. The prophets mainly concerned in this were: Amos and Hosea for the northern kingdom, and Micah and Isaiah for the southern.

I. The Impending Crisis

Up to the death of Elisha the activities of the prophets, though concerned with the nation rather than with the individual, were directed mainly to its domestic affairs: with its succession of kings, as in the case of Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, and others; with the purity of its worship, as in the case of Elijah; and with its relations to the neighboring kingdom of Syria, as in the case of Elisha. It will be noted, too, that prophetic activity, when once the kingdom was split in two, was confined to the northern kingdom. The reason for this seems to be that the northern kingdom, being less fixed and organized in its religious and moral ideals, had correspondingly more need of the personal influence of the prophets, giving it warnings and directions as it were from hand to mouth; while in Judah the temple, with its priests, psalmists, and scholars, was far more committed to the steadying and enlightening influence of law and literature, making personal labors to a degree superfluous.[1] Prophets were men for crises and emergencies; and with these junctures, so long as they remained domestic, the southern kingdom, having a more deeply founded civil, social, and religious organization, was better fitted by its inherent resources to cope.

A great crisis was impending, however, which would draw the nation out of its parish and provincial ideas; which soon after the death of Elisha began to attract the attention of thoughtful statesmen; and which called forth the utmost of prophetic insight and foresight, in both kingdoms, to cope with. Israel, hitherto a secluded and self-centered nation, must henceforth reckon with the great powers of the world. To understand this, and the scope of it, we must consider the momentous world movement that the nation was destined to encounter.

[1] Cf. above, p. 130.

I

The Broad Historical Situation. It was just when the great military empire of Assyria began to move in its career of world conquest that the literary prophets, who were men of larger than local caliber, began their work with the Hebrew people. That work was addressed first to home interests; but it always had a world background, in the implicit consciousness that Jehovah, as God of heaven and earth, was shaping the mysterious events of history to His purpose. The broad situation of things, and Israel's relation thereto, comes progressively into view, as the prophetic era advances.

Up to the eighth century before Christ the ancient civilizations, which were of Semitic stock and centered in the Mesopotamian plains and uplands, could hardly be called empires, in the sense of united and organized governments. The political genius was not their gift. They were loose agglomerations of tribes, held together only by military force and despotism; tribes with discordant passions and interests, each petty province or city with its local god, and each larger state having a pantheon of jealous and quarreling deities. In all their strifes with each other the powers and fortunes of the gods were involved with those of the people, sharing with them in victory or defeat. Deities were honored or despised according to their prowess in wars or raids, and according to their caprice in sending or withholding fruitful seasons. Such was the prevailing religious consciousness of those times.

Of these ancient civilizations Chaldea, with its capital at Babylon, was the oldest and most highly cultured; a kind of recognized arbitress of the thought and learning of the eastern world.[1] At the opening of our era, however, Assyria, farther up the great rivers, which was a daughter state of

[1] This seems to be implied in Isaiah's oracle against Babylon; see especially Isa. xiv, 4 ("exactress," margin); and xiv, 12–14.

Chaldea and a worshiper of the same deities, was in the ascendant; being strongest and most aggressive in military conquest. Its capital was at Nineveh. It has been described as "the most brutal empire which was ever suffered to roll its force across the world." [1]

It was with this arrogant military empire, from about 745 B.C., when Tiglath Pileser IV began to reign, that the little states around the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, Israel among them, had to reckon; the Assyrian hosts coming, in successive raids of conquest, devastating, ravaging, extorting tribute, or deporting whole communities and peoples, until, outside of Egypt, the Assyrian empire was virtually master of the ancient world. It was not a power to civilize, but to subjugate, and to enrich itself with booty and slaves.

All this looks, from one point of view, like a meaningless chaos of brute force and heartless greed. Such perhaps was its only conscious motive. Not so, however, did the prophets regard it; nor can we so interpret it, in the broader historical light which later ages shed upon it. It was rather the beginning of a vast world movement toward unity, toward concentrated and organized power, and so toward such stable and homogeneous government as could be the field for a progressive and enlightened civilization. As such it was as truly Jehovah's work as was his local preparation in Israel. He had a purpose for civilization as well as for religion; and as this was by degrees disclosed the prophets realized increasingly that he was rising as in wrath to "do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act" (Isa. xxviii, 21).

Its Developed Meaning

The vigorous but ferocious empire of Assyria had its day; and was followed in course of time by the more humane and cultured empire of Chaldea; and this in turn, under the conquests of Cyrus, by the more austere sway of Medo-Persia.

[1] G. A. Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," Vol. II, p. 91.

Under this latter régime the Aryan race, with its genius for civilization, took the helm of world-empire from the Semitic hands hitherto in control; the same imperial dominance that through the Greeks and Romans, also of Aryan stock, and their modern successors, has continued to this day the chief civilizing power of the world.

The Hebrew Contribution

It was just during this colossal shift of empire from Semitic to Aryan hands that the Hebrew era of literary prophecy lasted, and that the people of Israel underwent their strange fortune of exile, dispersion, and return. Their destiny was to be not that of a victorious but of a tributary and subject people; to be absorbed, like other peoples, in the huge melting-pot of tribes and cults. Not like other peoples, however, were they to lose their identity, or the sacred religious trust which they had inherited from their fathers. From a very early period of their history they had possessed the oracle pronounced upon them by Balaam (Num. xxiii, 9):

> Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone,
> And shall not be reckoned among the nations;

and whatever vicissitudes of worldly lot they passed through, though it were the extreme of oppression and dispersion, that distinctiveness and independence of character must remain intact. It was to promote this — to define and purge and purify it — that the great prophets began, as it were instinctively, to work, as soon as the peril of invasion began to be foreseen. It was their way of making their people ready for their fate; fortifying them not by walls and ramparts but by character. And when the stress came, a sterling character, an enlightened conscience, was their contribution to the welter of the times.

II

Rising to the Occasion. As the nation thus approaches the crisis of its destiny, it is well to note how the literary method of the great prophets conforms to the large situation. Prophecy, as a type of literary utterance, has a style of its own, quite different from that of the historians and sages, and eminently adapted to its sublime object and mission.

NOTE. *The Prophetic Style.* Professor Gardiner, in "The Bible as English Literature," p. 209, thus describes it:

"Of all the writings in the [English] Bible these oracles of the prophets are the most foreign and the least like anything that we have in modern literature: as they appear here they belong to a vanished past. Men are still born who have glimpses of the everlasting verities to communicate to other men; but they deliver them in forms wholly different. The prophet of the Old Testament was at once preacher and statesman, seer of visions and guide in the affairs of the nation, reformer of religion, moralist, and poet. The prophecies contain deliverances on all subjects, from new revelations of the nature of Jehovah to the practical questions of tithes or the keeping of the Sabbath. Yet through them all . . . , the normal form is poetical, and they all show the parallelism of the Hebrew poetry."

As regards its form, the prophetic style has the rhythmical swing of impassioned address. Its verse structure, if such we may call it, is not so lyrical as that of the Psalms; not so condensed in phrasing as that of the Proverbs and Job. It bears much the same relation to the more metrical types of poetry that dramatic blank verse like Shakespeare's bears to lyric and heroic verse like Wordsworth's or Pope's. Some analogy to it is furnished by the rhythmical and yet not measured roll of high oratory, like Webster's or Burke's. In other words, it is the style naturally evolved in a nation gifted with the poetry of passion, when a speaker conscious that he is dealing with the most momentous issues of life puts into his utterance (essentially oral) the whole energy of his emotion, his imagination, and his idealized thinking.

It is its transcendent point of view, and scale of treatment, the high issues with which it deals, and the imagery and atmosphere thus occasioned, which make the prophetic style sound so foreign to modern ears. The prophets themselves maintain that they are bringing to men the actual words of Deity. "Thus saith Jehovah" is the distinctive prophetic formula. They are not without a sense of what this means for scope, dignity, sublimity, and power of language. They must indeed put their thoughts in "matter-moulded forms of speech"; but they are consciously expressing God's thought and presuming to make Him speak in character. It is a felt interfusion of divine and human mind; and therefore subject, style, and point of view must be befitting to so high a source and copartnership. To work in the feeling that they were responsible spokesmen of the Being who

Identification with Jehovah's Mind

> formeth the mountains, and createth the winds,
> And declareth unto man what is his thought[1]

must have been, however we view the result, the most tremendous literary enterprise ever undertaken by man. And the thought of Jehovah, dealing with earthly and human affairs as their Creator and Controller sees them, must needs be strange unless the writer and reader can in a degree raise themselves to the same point of view.

The habitually recognized sphere of Jehovah's will and work is not limited in time and space. This presupposition of the literary prophets becomes increasingly clear to them as their work goes on. Jehovah's word is brought indeed to a particular chosen nation, and is adapted to a particular situation; but its field of operation is the whole unbounded world of nature and man. This seems to be recognized in the constantly used term "Jehovah of Hosts," the prophetic title ascribed to God,

Attitude toward Natural Forces

[1] Amos iv, 13.

For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind,
And declareth unto man what is his thought;
That maketh the morning darkness,
And treadeth upon the high places of the earth, —
Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name;[1] —

wherein it is left undefined whether His "hosts" are the hosts of heaven, the forces of nature, or the armies of men. It is a comprehensive term for whatever agency, natural or spiritual, works His purpose in the world.

Hence the great natural forces, not deified as by the heathen, nor distributed among various wills as by polytheists, are rather Jehovah's ways of speaking to men and thereby revealing warnings and directions for human life. They are not blind or occult forces, such as men invoke by divination, but the reasonable work of a single mind and a justifiable purpose; hence consistent with themselves and meant for the comprehension of men (see Amos iii, 3–8).

A notable feature of the prophetic utterance, therefore, is the immense part that nature plays. The prophets are the earliest and greatest poets of nature. Not only the violent and exceptional forces, seemingly so arbitrary and unguided, — such as earthquake, volcanic fires, destructive storms, blight and locusts, devouring worms, pestilence (see, for example, Joel i, 2–ii, 14; Amos iv, 6–13; vii, 1–9), — but the regular and beneficent powers too, the fruitful round of seasons, the gentle influences of sun and rain, the response of nature to cultivation (see, for example, Hos. ii, 8–23; Isa. v, 1–7), are eloquent of Jehovah's will and purpose. The mind of God is thus felt as intimately inwoven with nature, making its aspects the reflection of the spiritual condition of men; so that in the more highly wrought passages nature is prophesied as smiling and fertile, or barren and desolate, according to the prevailing spirit that actuates the inhabitants.

[1] Amos iv, 13.

NOTE. See, for instance, Isa. xi, 6–9, where all venomous reptiles and beasts of prey are figured as in peaceful harmony with the wise and beneficent sway of the "shoot out of the stock of Jesse," — a state of things repeated in Isa. lxv, 25; see also Isa. xxxiv, 8–15, where utter desolation and barrenness are predicated of a land (Edom) wherein blood feud and the spirit of cruelty hold sway.

Attitude toward Historical Movements

In the world of human affairs, likewise, where are devastating wars and mysterious movements of empire, Jehovah is still the Director and Wielder, choosing and using his fitting agencies, making men's small purposes work out his great one. All this comes to light in a gradually enlarging view, of which all the prophets are in greater or less degree aware. The brutal Assyrian power, coming upon Israel so resistlessly, is interpreted and limited as an instrument of Jehovah's purpose (Isa. x, 5–19; xxxvii, 28, 29); the limits of Nebuchadnezzar's power, under whom the people of the kingdom of Judah were subdued and carried into exile, are predicted and bounded (Jer. li, 34, 44); the later more humane and civilizing function of Cyrus is approved and supported (Isa. xliv, 28–xlv, 7). In a word, the prophets are conforming their thought and imagery not to the provincial scale of Palestine but to the universal scale of the world. As prophecy goes on, too, it becomes as limitless in time as in space. It forecasts a range and height of conditions which must needs require all history and all time to make eternal (Isa. ii, 2–4; lxv, 17–25).

Large Units of Character

As the message of the prophets was rather to nations than to individuals, their conception of character is in the absolute and in the mass, — a whole nation's traits at once. The nation or race, with the large resultant of its inherited and cultivated traits, was its unit of character; its fortunes and destiny those of an organic community. The religious and moral principles inculcated are indeed the same for individual and nation; but it is with

the kind of nation that the sum of individual traits produces, the whole nation as it were a solidarity and composite personality, that the prophets are concerned. The Hebrew race's survival and mission in the large movements of the times, accordingly, depend on their character and stamina as a people educated in Jehovah's ways and molded morally to his will.

This solidarity of estimate holds for other nations as truly as for Israel.. The various nations by whom they were surrounded, with the type of character impressed on them by history and culture, were to the prophets like persons in a great world drama. They were individualized and judged accordingly; much as in modern thought we estimate the French or Teutonic or Celtic type of character. There was Moab with its aristocratic pride; Edom with its heartless inhumanity; Tyre with its trafficking commercial spirit; Assyria with its brutal arrogance; Babylonia with the "exactress" spirit of its ancient culture; Egypt with its craftiness and its inefficiency. All these were organic communal forces which Jehovah was wielding to his will and purpose. The prophets were keen and penetrative students of their neighbor nationalities, and knew their hereditary and developed traits. A considerable proportion of the work of the three leading literary prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, is devoted to oracles on the nations (Isa. xiii–xxiii; Jer. xlvi–li; Ezek. xxv–xxxii); their fate, with that of Israel, being also a matter of intimate concern to Jehovah. Even Amos the herdsman prophet, in the beginning of the era of prophetic stress, shows his acquaintance with national origins, and scores their sins against humanity as one who has followed their history and temperament (Amos ix, 7; i, 3–ii, 8).

In the midst of these nations, its destiny vitally inwoven with theirs, the little Hebrew nation must needs maintain its own racial type of culture and character intact, so that it

The Hebrew Fidelity to Type

can hold its own and fulfill its unique mission in the movement of the ages. To this object the prophets, in singleness of spirit and aim, conform their warnings and promises. They have for Israel an ideal of communal integrity, of civic and social righteousness; which ideal must be held clear and strong before the people, and to which they must be brought back from all their perverseness and errors. As their standard of life was higher than that of any other nation, so it was of corresponding moment that they be held sternly to it, in order to be, as a prophet expresses it, "an ensign of the peoples" (see Isa. xi, 10, 12; xlix, 22; lxii, 10).

Hence the prophets' prevailing tone of rebuke and judgment. As we read their utterances superficially, reproof and correction seems the dominating note; and the boon held out to the people is not that of glory and ascendancy in the earth but of penitence and return to Jehovah. In their view, as Israel must evolve a type of character for the spiritual uses of the world, so this must be correspondingly thorough and morally sound. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," was Jehovah's word to them through Amos; "therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos iii, 2).

III

The Forecast in Joel. From these general considerations of the prophetic style we return now to the historic and prophetic situation with which the literary prophets deal. As we have seen, they are working in the dim presage of an impending world movement, in which Israel is to play a momentous though hidden part. As preparation for this, the nation must pass through a searching ordeal: must suffer from invasions and cruel wrongs on the part of the stronger nations, must experience the break-up of their state and the evils of exile, must endure outrage of injustice which will

seem to make their allegiance to Jehovah a futile thing. Yet out of it all will come some destiny nobler than could otherwise be (cf. Hab. i, 5). The prophetic foresight of this strange experience comes but gradually, each successive prophet having a presage only of the next stage; but along with this progress of prophecy comes by degrees the sense that it is to be not only an ordeal to be weathered but an opportunity to be seized and turned to good. It takes a long period of prophetic education to forecast and interpret the successive stages of this national experience; each prophet contributing his share as fitting the existing situation.

One prophet there is, however, who, taking occasion of a destructive scourge of nature, announces that "the day of Jehovah is at hand," and draws a presage of the larger design of God, from the mysterious present judgment to the divine purpose far beyond. It is the prophet Joel. We know nothing of him, except that he is called "Joel, the son of Pethuel"; nor of the date of his book. The opinion of critics is divided as to whether he is the earliest or the latest of the literary prophets, the majority holding that he is late. My opinion is that he is the earliest of them; that he was a native of the kingdom of Judah, prophesying a few years before Amos. The purport of his message is the same, whatever period we assign him to; but it seems better to fit the times soon after the death of Elisha. He is a kind of herald prophet, who in brief outline gives, so to say, a broad program of Jehovah's progressive design in the momentous crisis now impending.

The Locust Scourge

A tremendous plague of locusts, such as the oldest inhabitants have never seen or heard of, has ravaged the land, destroying all the vegetation, so that even the offering of grains and fruits for the Temple fails. The prophet uses this as the cue of his message; describing in realistic details the widespread desolation and distress it has wrought, and calling on the priests of the

Temple to gather the people for fasting and lamentation. From the situation of unrelieved woe thus occasioned, he goes on in the second chapter to reveal its meanings: it is the sign of the day of Jehovah, "great and very terrible" (ii, 11). The locust invasion is then described realistically, but with details which apply to invading armies as well as locusts; thus intimating in what way Israel's trial is to come. It is a veiled prediction of the coming of Assyrian hosts, who had already made repeated invasions of pillage and conquest as far west as Damascus, and had laid many of the smaller kingdoms under tribute. The plague of locusts, coming at this time, thus gave realism to a calamity which a political as well as spiritual insight would see must sooner or later fall upon Jehovah's people.

The Contrite Response

From this attitude of unrelieved dejection the prophet makes a brave transition to a tone of hopefulness and promise. With an exhortation to his people to turn to Jehovah in sincere penitence, "rending their hearts and not their garments" (ii, 13), he bids them make trial of his disposition of mercy, to see if he will not turn away the evil. From this experimental stage he passes to a confident tone of promise, predicting a later restoration of fruitfulness and plenty, in which "the northerner" (ii, 20)[1] will be removed far off, and the people, the losses from the locust scourge fully made up, will no longer be a reproach among the nations. It is a description of the first stage in a truly spiritual service of Jehovah, and its immediate result. A greater result, however, is yet to come. After the people are reinstated in the joy of restored comfort and prosperity, there will come an era of spiritual new energy in which all classes will share; "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams,

[1] It will be noted that the word "army," being in italics, indicates thus that it is supplied by the translators; the word "northern," in fact, stands alone, implying any scourge that comes by way of the north; cf. Jer. i, 14.

your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (ii, 28, 29). This prophecy, it will be remembered, was cited by St. Peter as coming to fulfillment at Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus (Acts ii, 16–18). Such is the inner enlightenment and strength by which the prophet will fortify his people to bear the portents of the day of Jehovah; and a deliverance will be provided for those who call on him, "and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call" (ii, 32).

The Valley of Decision

Then, after Israel has received its destined spiritual quickening and energy, will come a time of reckoning, when all the nations that have ravaged Israel will be gathered together in the valley of Jehoshaphat, called poetically "the valley of decision." Here they shall know of Jehovah's will and of his avenging might; and as they see his gracious favor to his own chosen people, shall see also how their violent and heartless deeds recoil on their own heads. It is the earliest prophetic prediction of a general judgment of the world, — a prediction that belongs to the kind of prophecy called apocalyptic. The nations are called upon to prepare for this decisive judgment as if for war, bringing forth their best wisdom and courage to meet the divine ordeal. "Beat your plowshares into swords," the prophet bids them, "and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong" (iii, 10). At this early stage of world prophecy the prophet's vision is only broad enough to see the world tested by war; but the time of more peaceful outlook will soon come, when this proverb will be reversed, and the implements of war will be turned into implements of husbandry (see Isa. ii, 4; Mic. iv, 3).

Thus in this preliminary prophecy of Joel is mapped out in comprehensive terms a kind of chart of the trying experience soon to come, and of the large purpose of Jehovah. The prophecy is uttered in Judah, where are the Temple and

the ordained rites of communal worship; but like all the prophets he thinks of all Israel, in its relation to Jehovah, as one undivided family. The prophecy is unusual in that it does not meet the people with an invective against their sins; it is expressed in terms of pity and mercy.

NOTES. 1. *The Date of Joel.* It is the more prevalent opinion at present that Joel is late among the prophets, being, as is thought, about contemporary with Malachi (cir. 500 B.C.). The opinion is founded on considerations which seem to me inconclusive. From the general tone of the prophetic and apocalyptic ideas, and from the relation of his ideas to the larger situation of the prophetic era, it seems to me rather that he is the pioneer of the literary prophets.

2. *Apocalyptic Elements in Joel.* The word "apocalyptic," from the Greek *apokalupsis*, "revelation," "disclosure," is a term used by scholars to denote that strain of prophecy which deals with the final aspects of coming events, like the coming of a golden age, or a time of judgment, or the disclosure of heaven; prophecy without definite reference to conditioning circumstances, and without concrete predictions of historical events. The typical apocalyptic book of the Old Testament is the Book of Daniel, which is largely made up of visions, under symbolic forms, of a coming kingdom of heaven. The Book of Revelation, sometimes called the Apocalypse, is a New Testament book in the same vein, and employing some of Daniel's imagery. All the prophets, however, have passages in the apocalyptic consciousness; it belongs to the natural enlargement of their spiritual sense beyond the crises and events of their own immediate time. Instances of such passages may be found in Joel iii, 14–17; Isa. ii, 2–4, and the parallel to this latter, Mic. iv, 1–3; Isa. lxv, 17; lxvi, 22–24.

II. In the Northern Kingdom

Ever since the secession of the ten tribes under Jeroboam I (933 B.C.), prophetic activity had been more prevalent in the northern kingdom than in the southern. Samuel, the father of the prophetic order, was of the northern tribe of Ephraim (1 Sam. i, 1). The so-called "sons of the prophets" (that is, disciples of the prophets) are mentioned only in connection with the affairs of the northern kingdom. In that

kingdom also, besides the minor prophetic persons who came with special errands, lived the great personages Elijah and Elisha.

The reason why the prophets were more active in the northern kingdom than in the southern was because they were more needed there. Conditions were more primitive. Religion and education were less organized and stable; principles of belief and conduct less defined and developed. In the southern kingdom were the temple worship, centralized in Jerusalem, the established priesthood, and the state under the dynasty of the house of David constitutionally committed to the pure service of Jehovah; and hence the people in general had a more established order of ideas to go by. In the northern kingdom, on the other hand, as ideas were less defined and diffused, more dependence had to be placed on direct personal guidance; which the prophets supplied as national emergencies arose, and which the sons of the prophets did much to maintain.[1]

The work of these prophetic masters and disciples, molding the people's mind in loyalty to Jehovah and cultivating an educated conscience to which later prophets could appeal, was of untold importance. By their personal educative work they prepared the soil, so to say, for the word of the literary prophets; which came to them on the eve of their greatest crisis, a few years before their kingdom was broken up by exile and foreign dominance.

I

Amos, and his Prophecy of Judgment. It was not from their own prophets, however, that the first prophetic warning came to the northern kingdom. It would seem that their own prophetic order had become so much a perfunctory and time-serving thing, so subservient to the corrupt public sentiment, that no warning which reproved the

[1] See above, pp. 129–132.

nation's iniquity could have any acceptance (cf. Amos v, 10; vii, 12, 13; Hos. iv, 5; ix, 7, 8). Prophets and priests alike were as bad as the people (cf. Hos. iv, 6, 9); and the people themselves, in this prosperous reign of Jeroboam II, were at ease and heedless in civic corruption and sensual life (Amos vi, 1–6; cf. Isaiah's later description, Isa. xxviii, 1–8). So the word of warning and denunciation must needs come from outside; and it came from the neighbor kingdom of Judah, where the moral standards were higher and more authoritative, and where the name "Zion" still counted as a spiritual center for the word of Jehovah (Amos i, 2; cf. Joel iii, 16).

This warning, which was first given orally, we have as it was afterward written out, in what is called, "The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel" (Amos i, 1). Tekoa was an outlying town, or rather region, on the hills of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. Amos does not come officially, as if sent by his government or its priests (vii, 14, 15); for he represents that Judah itself is involved in the same apostate tendencies, and has little right to dictate (ii, 4, 5). Still, the word he brings is identified with Jerusalem, the recognized spiritual capital of all Israel (cf. Jer. xxv, 30, 31), whence judgment is decreed for all nations.

His Appearance in Bethel

Amos's prophecy dates from about 754 B.C., some twenty-eight years before the fall of the northern kingdom. The specific note of time given is "two years before the earthquake" (Amos i, 1), a disaster which was long remembered for its severity (see Zech. xiv, 5), but which apparently was not taken as a warning from Jehovah (cf. Isa. ix, 9, 10). The prophecy came just when both Israel and Judah were at the height of the greatest prosperity they had ever enjoyed. Thus it was like lightning from a clear sky, uttered while the Assyrian danger

was still so remote that Amos himself did not give its specific name, but warned the people that Jehovah would cause them "to go into captivity beyond Damascus" (v, 27).

His sudden appearance, apparently on a festal occasion, in Bethel, the royal sanctuary town of Israel, was rather sensational, and must have seemed rude and uncouth to the gay crowds, as the appearance of Elijah had been a century before. But when, after predicting that the sanctuaries would be laid waste (vii, 9), he went on to say that Jehovah would "rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword," he was reported to the king by Amaziah the priest of Bethel as a conspirator, and with rude words sent back to his own land (vii, 10-13). Thus the prophecy which as oral preaching was interrupted and scorned had to be preserved by writing; and we have it as a literary production, written several years afterward.

His Prophetic Credentials

In thus coming over from the sister kingdom and warning Israel, Amos disclaims connection with any organization which can either support or modify his word (vii, 14). He is not of the order of the prophets, either as leader or disciple. He is not, as his hearers intimate, prophesying for hire or for a living (vii, 12). He is not beholden to king or government or man. His call and message are immediately from Jehovah. As a herdsman and fruit cultivator he has gathered his convictions on the rugged hills of Tekoa, in immediate communion with nature (cf. v, 7, 8), and in meditation on the history of his and surrounding peoples (cf. i, ii, ix, 7) and on the movements of empire. His prophecy shows a remarkable breadth of outlook and depth of insight, as well as purity and vigor of language; an evidence of the culture to which a man of the people could attain in this age of the Hebrew state. It throws light also on the mind of the great prophets as a class. They were men who, in their intimate realization of Jehovah's nature and will, felt also his purpose in the

spiritual pulse-beat of humanity and their own nation's relation thereto (iii, 1–8).

The tone of Amos's prophecy is stern and denunciatory. He inveighs against the prevalent heartlessness, injustice, and sensuality which are sapping the character of the nation (v, 10–13; viii, 4–7): the greed, dishonesty, and cruelty of the powerful classes on the one hand; the shameless debauchery of the luxurious classes on the other (vi, 1–8); and hints what a contrast this is to the old heroic days (ii, 6–12). With such corruption of morals all their elaborateness of ritual and formal worship is worse than worthless before Jehovah (v, 21–27), is abomination to him; and the coming day of Jehovah, which is to this day as effect to cause, will be darkness instead of light (v, 18–20).

His Indictment and Presage

Such is the gist of his indictment, given mostly in literal and exceedingly trenchant terms. Then in a final series of illustrative figures he puts the summary of it, with its purpose, in symbolic form. The first of these is a vision of Jehovah standing by a wall with a plumb line (vii, 7–9) — a symbol of the standard of righteousness essential to the welfare and survival of a nation. It is his interpretation of this vision which causes the priest Amaziah to accuse him of treason and to send him back to Tekoa (vii, 10–13). Then follows, secondly, a vision of a basket of summer fruit (viii, 1–3); from which he gathers the lesson: "The end is come upon my people Israel." The symbolism of this is not clear to us who read Amos in translation; because he draws the lesson not so much by essential significance as by wordplay, — as the words for "summer fruit" (*ḳaits*) and "end" (*ḳēts*) are in Hebrew almost identical in form; — still, the ripeness and rottenness of summer fruit may be connoted. This is followed, thirdly (ix, 9), by a strong figure which, though still severe and searching, contains a promise that compensates for the warning and

gives its ultimate purpose. It is the figure of the sifting of grain. "For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth." This reveals the large and in the end beneficent ideal that forms the background of the general prophetic message. By all their threats and warnings, severe as these are, the prophets are preparing for Israel a noble destiny.

II

Hosea, and his Sense of Outraged Love. Amos came to Israel, as Elijah before him had come, from another part of the country, pronouncing doom like a stern and unpitying judge; and he went his way again as a stranger, having apparently gained only scorn and contempt. Soon after his mission was over, however, he was succeeded by another prophet, Hosea, a man of very different point of view and temperament. As one born and bred among the people, familiar with their inherited customs and character, Hosea felt with intimate realization their condition as from within.

He attacks the same prevalent evils as did Amos; predicts the same doom of national dissolution and dispersion. His indictment, indeed, is even more severe than Amos's. But unlike his predecessor he speaks in the spirit not of austerity and judgment but of love and entreaty. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel?" (xi, 8) — such is the undertone of his prophecy. The phases of national and social iniquity which come home most poignantly to him are such as correspond to this loving, yearning nature. As Amos has inveighed against the high-handed wrongs and greed which are evident to the world, Hosea feels the evil of the more inward vices: the prevalent falseness and licentiousness, the spiritual ignorance, the social rottenness and consequent decay of all that is sound and manly in character.

Hosea's prophetic career dates from near the end of the reign of Jeroboam II — that is, from about 745 B.C. — and extends to about 736 B.C., or some fifteen years before the downfall of Samaria. It began while still the nation, as in the time of Amos's prophesying, was in its careless and luxurious prosperity. But when, in 740 B.C., Jeroboam died, the moral rottenness and weakness of Israel came to the surface in a period of violence and anarchy. "No sooner was he dead," says a modern account, "than all the faults of administration and sources of weakness which his pomp had disguised became evident, and suddenly the death-throes of Israel began."[1] In the course of the succeeding eighteen years Israel had six kings, several of whom were assassinated by usurpers; and those who could keep their throne for a little while had to buy off the encroaching power of Assyria by paying enormous tribute. Meanwhile attempts were made to gain the alliance and help of Egypt; which only made matters worse, and revealed the confused state that the mind of the nation was in, wholly unworthy of a people chosen of Jehovah (cf. vii, 11). They were not lacking in desperate bravery when the actual siege of their capital came; their lack was rather of the wisdom, the poise, the stamina, which a loyal and intelligent service of their God would have engendered.

His Disordered Times

It was during this turbulent and anarchic time that all the latter part of Hosea's prophecy was uttered; and the very style of his prophecy, crowded, abrupt, unorganized, reflects the anomalous situation. Both his literal utterances and his figures are full of this quality. "My people are destroyed," he says, "for lack of knowledge" (iv, 6). "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding; they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria" (vii, 11), — falling helplessly into the clutches of the arrogant outer kingdoms, as a dove flutters into a trap.

How his Prophecy Reflects the Situation

[1] Westphal and Du Pontet, "The Law and the Prophets," p. 286.

"Ephraim, he mixeth among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned" (vii, 8), — a striking image of an inconsistent, unformed character, burnt to crisp on one side and raw dough on the other. And the cause of it all, to the prophet's mind, is that senseless proclivity to idolatry which bewilders and debases the idea and service of God. "Ephraim is joined to idols," he says; "let him alone" (iv, 17). These and many other utterances, expressed often in very telling figures, go to make up the prophet's description of an enfeebled and degenerate national character, unfit to hold its own and maintain a worthy manhood among the heathen nations of the earth.

His Lesson from Experience

And yet all this is said with utmost tenderness by Hosea, preëminently the prophet of love. "My heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together" (xi, 8), he says in bitterness of grief. Nor does he leave his people without pointing out a way upward from their apostasy and degradation, though at the cost of exile and dispersion. They were to be punished, in a way that would reveal the meaning of their sin, but the punishment would be remedial. This oracle he gives them through the fundamental figure under which he conceives of their relation to Jehovah — a figure drawn from his own domestic experience.

Hosea had married a wife who soon after marriage proved an adulteress. Like Isaiah after him, he gave to the children of this union names in the meaning of which his prophetic message was symbolized. To the first, born while his wife was still faithful, he gave the name "Jezreel," significant both for past history and future destiny; for Jezreel was the city where bloody deeds had been committed calling for vengeance (i, 4); but also its meaning, "whom God hath sown," was significant of the dispersion that awaited the nation. "I will sow her unto me in the earth," he says later (ii, 23), not in severity but in promise.

To the second and third children, born illegitimately, he gave the names Lo-Ruhamah, "unpitied," and Lo-Ammi, "no kin of mine"; significant alike of their detachment from his paternity and of the people's apostasy from Jehovah. Later the wife left him, becoming a common harlot, going lower and lower in infamy until she was sold into slavery. His affection for her, however, did not cease. It was intensified, rather, by her hapless condition. He bought her back, and after a fitting season of seclusion restored her to his home and family.

From this domestic experience Hosea deduced one of the most tender prophetic revelations of all time. In his own heart, remaining so true and steadfast in spite of outraged affection, he read *a fortiori* the unchanging love of Jehovah for his people. If Hosea, a man, could so suffer and forgive, much more could God. So this inner experience became for him thenceforth the speaking symbol of relations in Israel. They too, in their infatuation for idolatrous worship, had wandered off after the nature gods whom they deemed the givers of their fertility and prosperity; and they must be made to know by stern experience of exile and seclusion what was the spiritual consequence of idolatry and who was the real Source of their blessings. Jehovah had loved and cared for them with the tenderness of a husband. They had the home, the protection, the comforts granted a wife. But they had chosen to debauch their spirit with paramours; and barrenness and slavery must be their natural doom (cf. ix, 14). They must be banished from their pleasant land to the wilderness; must be scattered among the nations, until again they were fit for the home and household of Jehovah.

From Hosea's time onward this figure of Jehovah's relation to his people as a marriage relation, and of their apostasy as the unfaithfulness of a false wife, became a staple image in the prophets. It is applied afterward to Judah

by Jeremiah and by the Second Isaiah (Jer. iii, 1; Isa. liv, 4–8; lxii, 4, 5; cf. i, 21; Mic. i, 7); to Jerusalem, and to both Jerusalem and Samaria by Ezekiel (Ezek. xvi and xxiii).

Yet along with the prophecy of doom are hints and hopes of better things to succeed. It is Israel's destiny, foretold from old time, to be "as the sand of the sea for multitude" (i, 10; cf. Gen. xxii, 17); and if scattered, as the name "Jezreel" indicates, yet the scattering may be a sowing and the precursor of harvests. It is this destiny which the prophet seems to presage for Israel. At the time of their deportation (722 B.C.) this kingdom of Israel disappears from history; and much conjecture has been made by scholars — and near-scholars — as to what became of the lost ten tribes. "I will sow her unto me in the earth" (ii, 23) is Jehovah's word to them; as if Israel, brought by dispersion to the better mind, were somehow to remain integral in character, and be the seed of a better civilization.

His Presage of Hope

The words in which he sums up the forecast of their destiny have a kind of apocalyptic strain, like the oracles of Joel and Isaiah. They prophesy a far-off event which can be understood not in political or literal but only in spiritual terms, — the finality which was dimly before all the prophets, but which each one apprehended according to the ruling ideas of his age. "For the children of Israel," he says, "shall abide many days without king and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days" (iii, 4, 5). The whole final chapter (xiv) is in this tone.

III. In the Southern Kingdom

As the downfall of the northern kingdom approached, the preliminary disturbances were not unfelt by its sister state, the kingdom of Judah. That kingdom also, indeed, directly or indirectly, was shaken to its center by the Assyrian invasions, and in moral stamina was as ill prepared to meet them as was its northern neighbor. With the vast world movements in progress, wherein the petty tribal states were gradually being absorbed in the great empires, a similar doom for Judah in her turn could only be a question of time. And that the same doubtful policy toward the great powers was prevalent there as Hosea had denounced in Israel may be seen in such chapters as Isaiah xxviii and xxx; wherein the great prophet of Judah draws a direct lesson for his people from the headstrong folly of the northern kingdom.

I

A Postponement of Doom. But Judah's time before her ordeal of actual exile was postponed for a century and a quarter more; and from the literary and prophetic products of the period that intervened we can understand why. It was Judah's providential duty, as we have seen, to set the moral and cultural standard for the whole family of Israel; and she had been too heedless of her trust, too recreant to her responsibility (see Amos ii, 4, 5; Hos. xii, 2). There was much educational development yet needed, much training in the first principles of truth and righteousness, before the southern kingdom could be ready to meet her doom. For it must be remembered that her distinctive destiny lay beyond the break-up of an independent state. This was only a preliminary, only a necessary step, toward something else. Her real destiny was rather to be enlargement, through transplantation, to a momentous mission for

humanity. It was for this that unawares to herself she was in the large sense undergoing preparation.

Herein we see the difference in the destinies of the two kingdoms. Israel, the northern people, with its more developed cosmopolitan sense, was to be "sown to Jehovah in the earth" (Hos. ii, 23), the hidden seed and leaven of a more sterling type of character among the nations; but the vague prophecies of its restoration do not imply a restored state (cf. Amos v, 14, 15; ix, 9–11; Hos. i, 11; xi, 9–11; xiv, 4–8). It was rather to work out its destiny as a people dispersed yet still faithful to type. Judah, on the other hand, though she is to be exiled in the same way, is to remain organically intact, and in course of time to be again in her own land a center of enlightenment and sanity of conscience to the world (cf. Isa. ii, 2–4; Mic. iv, 1–3; Isa. xlix, 5–7; lx). In other words, in the general leveling movement of empire, wherein as in a huge melting pot the provincial tribes and their grotesque little gods disappear, it is this small nation alone whose God and whose law of life are destined to survive and be permanent. The subjugation and exile of this people are not to be their destruction but their opportunity; and hence their preparation for so momentous a destiny must be sound and vital to correspond.

The Transfer, and the Averted Crisis

Accordingly, from the overthrow of the northern kingdom on, the field of prophetic activity is transferred to the remaining state of Judah. It is not to be supposed that either prophets or people can see the end or the deep meaning of so great a destiny at once. The prophets can only see and take the next step — steering the nation's character and ideals in a way that will eventually come out so. To this end they must act both as statesmen and as religious and moral teachers, the two functions being in their view inseparable.

When the northern kingdom fell, the kingdom of Judah, to which hitherto it had been a kind of buffer state, lay

open in its turn to Assyrian encroachment and invasion. The evil had indeed already begun, when King Ahaz of Judah so weakly invited the aid of Assyria against a coalition of Syria and Israel in which they, having first in vain sought his coöperation, plotted to dethrone him (2 Kings xvi, 5–9; Isa. vii). Instead of joining with them against Assyria he invited the foe himself as ally against them, thus putting himself under foreign tribute and power. With this short-sighted state policy was conjoined an infatuation on his part for the more æsthetic Assyrian religion, and of course disloyalty to the worship of Jehovah. He showed this by introducing foreign idolatries wholesale into Judah, and giving them precedence over his native worship (2 Kings xvi). This was in 732 B.C., ten years before Samaria fell.

This cowardly and faithless policy on the part of King Ahaz, favoring as it did just the kind of encroachment that Assyria desired, was the beginning of a long period of trouble and suspense for the Judean state. Through the reign of Ahaz's successor, Hezekiah, the tension continued, in varying phases of imminence or remoteness, until it culminated in the invasion, in 701 B.C., by Sennacherib; who laid waste many Judean towns, carried away more than two hundred thousand inhabitants,[1] and all but captured the capital city Jerusalem. On account of the sudden retreat of the Assyrian forces, however, an event which to Judah had all the effect of a miracle, the city remained inviolate, as Isaiah had stoutly prophesied it would (Isa. xxxvii, 33–35). Thus the crisis was averted, but only after it had become so imminent and acute as to work a profound and lasting moral effect on the whole nation.

It was while this crisis was threatening, during about one third of the eighth century B.C. that two prophets, nearly contemporaneous with each other, dealt with the situation.

[1] According to the memorial inscription by Sennacherib himself, the so-called Taylor cylinder, now in the British Museum.

These were: Micah, a country prophet, who lived in the village of Moresheth-Gath, near the frontier between Judah and the Philistine country; and Isaiah, the son of Amoz, beginning earlier and prophesying longer, who, living in Jerusalem and being himself of distinguished family, had the ear of the leading and wealthy classes. Twin prophets these two may not unfitly be called. Though speaking from the midst of different classes and environments, both sense with like intensity the signs of the times; both feel essentially the same national evils and needs; and both mold their messages to the same apocalyptic vision, described indeed in identical terms: the vision of a golden age succeeding in the latter days to the present bad one, and bringing in the final era of law and righteousness and peace (Isa. ii, 2–4 = Mic. iv, 1–3).

The Twin Prophets in Judah

II

Micah, Prophet of the Countryside. Of the two contemporary prophets Micah is the more primitive and austere, as might be expected of a country seer whose felt duty is to be the spokesman and champion of the common man. In general we may say that he sets forth in outline and rugged epitome what Isaiah, from his relatively cultured center, gives in more finished and rhetorical detail.

His prophecy, purporting to have been given "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," and dating from a time apparently a little before the fall of the northern kingdom, is addressed alike to both kingdoms as if they were an undivided people, — as indeed the prophets always regard them. It is "the word . . . which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem" (Mic. i, 1); the two capitals named as representing the two realms. In both kingdoms it is still a time of luxury and worldly prosperity, with their attendant evils equally flagrant in both. Micah's home, in the frontier region between Judah and the

Philistine country, just among the mortgaged farms where the land-grabbing greed of the times causes most distress, and near the great artery of trade and war where the Assyrian invasions of a few years later cause the most devastation, is favorably situated to observe spiritual and material conditions as they are. Of the coming invasions, however, he says little, beyond the general prediction that both Samaria (i, 6, 7) and Jerusalem (iii, 12, a prophecy recalled a full century later, Jer. xxvi, 18) are doomed. His regards are deeper; though he feels with realistic keenness the disasters that will come to the villages of his vicinity (i, 8–16). His preliminary object, for the realization of which he feels a special endowment, is "to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (iii, 8; cf. i, 5).

We have called Micah and Isaiah twin prophets. It seems to have been their mission, whether in actual collaboration or not, to work shoulder to shoulder for the spiritual welfare of their people. As Isaiah was the mentor of the leading classes in Jerusalem, Micah was the spokesman and champion of the plain people of the countryside. He shared their condition, their poverty, their wrongs. He knew and honored their native worth. He gave noble definition to their common-sense religion. And from all this he drew a prophetic outlook toward broader horizons and a worthier goal of life. In a true sense, indeed, we may call his prophecy an outline map of the prophetic movement from the point of view of the common man, the man undeflected by the crookedness of the world.

Let us note the main steps in this prophecy of his.

After his introductory warning and lament (chap. i), he begins his prophecy proper with a sharp indictment of the men who in both kingdoms seem to have gained control of the nation's affairs, the landed proprietors who plot and practice iniquity "because it is in the power of their hand" (ii, 1, 2). It was with them and their cruel mercenary spirit

that the most sweeping evil of the times lay (see ii, 1, 2; iii, 1–3; and cf. Isa. v, 8; Job xxiv, 2–8); a ruling spirit among the rich which was reducing the poor landsmen to destitution, and extorting cries of distress (ii, 4, 8, 9). The money greed seemed to be the motive everywhere; judges, priests, and prophets alike were under the blight of it (iii, 5, 11). It is not as mere invective, however, that the prophet brings this indictment. It is in order to portray the ruin it works in the nation's character. The prophetic vision is darkened and falsified (iii, 6, 7; cf. ii, 11); the religious sense is dimmed (iii, 11). From this hard and stupid state of things it is the prophet's endeavor to rouse them to a higher and contrasted ideal; it is not in Jehovah's purpose that the people of his hand should subside to the heartless level of greed and luxury. Their mission is other. "Arise ye, and depart," he says, "for this is not your resting-place; because of uncleanness that destroyeth, even with a grievous destruction" (ii, 10). Accordingly, as soon as he has put into a concrete prediction the destruction that will prove him true (iii, 12), he sets over against it the vision of a coming age of light and leading which his prophecy shares with Isaiah's (iv, 1–5; cf. Isa. ii, 2–4). The ruined temple is to be replaced by a world-temple, to which all nations will rejoice to come for the word of Jehovah. It is in having the missionary spirit, not the predatory, in being a center of light and kindly law, not of selfishness, that Jerusalem is to find her true rest and peace.

The Call to a Contrasted Destiny

In this call to a contrasted destiny Micah strikes the spiritual keynote of the whole prophetic movement; it is toward that beneficent object that, as we have noted, Israel's strange vicissitudes of history work together.[1] But we have also to note, as St. Paul afterwards did and as Micah evidently feels, that "they are not all Israel that are of Israel,"

[1] See above, pp. 136 ff.

(see Rom. ix, 6; cf. Matt. iii, 9). We cannot predicate this good tendency of all, or even of a majority, of the Jewish nation; to find it we must penetrate to the inner and nobler soul of the people, recognizing thereby a differentiation of moral and religious elements. It is just in this period covered by the prophetic activity of Micah and Isaiah, and perhaps first by Micah himself, that such differentiation is made; indicated by the symbolic personification used to designate the true Israel, "the daughter of Zion" (Mic. i, 13; iv, 8, 10, 13), — Zion being the local name that connoted Jehovah's special abode and place of revelation (cf. Joel iii, 16; Amos i, 2). In close connection with this term the prophet employs the idea of "the remnant," an idea of which Isaiah will make much use. It is to "the hill of the daughter of Zion" that the dominion will come, when Jehovah has "assembled" the remnant of Israel, whom Micah characteristically identifies with the poor people now so wronged and oppressed (ii, 12, 13; iv, 6–8). Then in an impassioned apostrophe he calls on the daughter of Zion, whom he represents as longing for a king and counselor, to "be in pain, and labor to bring forth . . . like a woman in travail" (iv, 9, 10); and predicts that she will be brought in exile to Babylon, where the assembled nations who have come to mock her will be themselves like sheaves on the threshing-floor, while she is the agency commissioned to thresh (iv, 9–v, 1), — a prophecy which seems to be recalled and applied at the time to which it refers (cf. Isa. xli, 15, 16). All this, whether written by Micah or added by a later editor,[1] is a remarkable epitome of Israel's contrasted destiny, introducing a number of symbolic terms which thenceforth play a prominent part in the prophetic vocabulary.

[1] As many critics maintain, on the apparent ground that every prophecy must needs be deemed as nearly a *vaticinium post eventu* as possible. The name "Babylon," vs. 10, scares them. With this, however, we are not especially concerned; we take the text as it is.

The apostrophe to the daughter of Zion, in which the prophet describes her longing for a king and the destiny which succeeds to her travail-pangs, is followed by an apostrophe to the little town of Bethlehem, predicting that out of that seemingly insignificant place is to come forth one "that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (v, 2). This is the earliest prophecy in which the hope of Israel is centered definitely in a person; and whatever it meant to the prophet's own mind, it was thenceforth taken as the prediction of a coming Messiah, and as fixing for future reference his birthplace (see Matt. ii, 4, 5). Micah's conception of his greatness is couched in terms of the shepherd and his flock (v, 4; cf. ii, 12), as befits the thought-range of a country prophet; he is proudly sensible also of the supreme honor done to an obscure place and a humble class of people such as he represents; but of one eternal truth the ages may be sure: "This man shall be our peace" (v, 5), — one of the most far-reaching prophecies of the Old Testament.

The Little Town of Bethlehem

For the rest, for what concerns the political events of the immediate future, the prophet's vision is vague and unformed; evidently it is not a material but a spiritual future that he has in mind, and this is not measurable in terms of time and season. He is well aware of the imminent Assyrian peril (v, 5, 6); but the only power he imagines to set against it is a power of leadership, "seven shepherds and eight principal men," and it is the one shepherd who, after all, will deliver the land (v, 6). From this more immediate prospect, however, he makes escape to the larger destiny of "the remnant of Jacob," who shall be among the nations both like the gentle influence of dew and rain (v, 7) and like the ravaging of the young lion (v, 8); and in whose day of power the cumbrous military lumber and the elaborate usages of idolatry will be cut off

(v, 10–15). All this betokens in the prophet a large spiritual presage, an intuition of coming inner values, which transcends his power to describe.

God's Plea for Plain Religion

The thought of the elaborate usages of idolatry which "in that day" are doomed to pass suggests by contrast the plainness and reasonableness of the religion that Jehovah requires from his people. This is not put as a requirement, however, but as a plea; it is "Jehovah's controversy with his people" (vi, 2), appealing to their simple sense of the way in which he has led them. The case of Balak and Balaam (Num. xxii–xxiv) is cited, apparently because of the lavish offerings made and wealth poured out in a heathen effort to buy a favorable response from Jehovah. In Micah's view, as in his contemporary Isaiah's (cf. Isa. i, 10–17), no such labored service is needed or fitting, though it reach the extreme of sacrifice (vi, 7). Then follows the celebrated utterance which is universally deemed the sanest and most reasonable definition of religion that the Old Testament or indeed any literature affords: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (vi, 8). It is the country prophet's remedy for a time that, with its tendencies to the spirit of greed, had grown top-heavy with its luxurious cultus (cf. Amos iv, 4, 5; Isa. i, 11).

This plea for plain religion is not made in invective as is Isaiah's. In a spirit of tolerance, rather, it recognizes in the people a sincere craving for the favor of God and a disposition to make the greatest sacrifices therefor. But these are the religiously inclined; and not all are so, perhaps indeed only a remnant. The plea has also a voice, however, for "the city," for the classes engaged in trade and traffic and husbandry, the classes whose mercenary spirit is getting the upper hand. If they will let their sound

intuition[1] speak, they too will see that a conduct that observes justice and mercy and humility has its vital claim upon them, a claim which their dishonest tricks of trade, derived from their more worldly brethren of the northern kingdom, have outraged. No peace of life, no real prosperity, no esteem and honor among the nations, can come of such practices; they are utterly inconsistent with God's requirement. Such seems to be the purport and connection of the passage (vi, 9–16). It is addressed to those whose favorite literature is not prophecy nor poetry but Wisdom.[2]

Emerging from the Moral Chaos

As Micah contemplates the spirit of his time, the sense of his loneliness therein, and of the falseness and rottenness of the social structure, comes upon him with overwhelming force; it is as if he were living in a moral chaos, wherein all kindly human relations were reversed and a man's enemies were the men of his own house. It is the pessimistic stage in his book of prophecy, from which his faith must make escape if he would keep sight of Jehovah's purpose at all (vii, 1–6).

Accordingly, in the last chapter of his book (vii, 7–20) the spirit of the prophet, by a magnificent resilience, emerges from the doubts and perplexities into which the evils of the time have temporarily plunged him. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy," he exclaims; "when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, Jehovah will be a light unto me" (vii, 8). We have noted his personified symbol the "daughter of Zion," whose mission it was to bring forth the kingly spirit of redemption and to "arise and thresh" (iv, 10, 13); we have to note here another personification, his enemy, "her who said unto me, Where is Jehovah thy God?" (vii, 10), a mocking spirit which he has encountered, which is destined to shame and extinction. It is "a day for building thy walls," the constructive day succeeding to this

[1] So I interpret the word translated "wisdom," vi, 9.

[2] See above, pp. 92–96.

disintegration. He depicts it in much the same terms as does Isaiah: the large and liberal time when peoples shall come to Israel from the great realms of the earth (vii, 12; cf. Isa. xix, 23, 24), and in Jehovah's light submit themselves to his fear (vii, 17; cf. Isa. xi, 12; xlix, 18; lx). Thus by his faith in that contrasted destiny to which in the beginning he has called his people, Micah pushes his prophecy to the outer limit of the prophetic range, and proves himself a worthy sharer with Isaiah in discovering and interpreting the inner signs of his day. In the sound spiritual insight of the twin prophets of Judah prophecy is responding nobly to its time of stress.

III

Isaiah of Jerusalem. Coming now to the sublimest of the prophets and one of the most vital literary forces of all time, we have from the outset to reckon, in the Book of Isaiah, with a divided authorship. Of the sixty-six chapters making up the book, the last twenty-seven (chapters xl–lxvi) belong to a period about one hundred and sixty years later than the period with which chapters i to xxxix deal, and is accordingly distinguished in modern scholarship as the Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah. This fact of divided authorship, which may be taken as an assured result of criticism, is determined by internal evidence, and naturally gives rise to much study of the relation of the two parts of the book to each other, — if indeed there is a connection more than accidental.

In the view which we shall here follow, and which is derived from the like internal evidence, the authorship may better be called composite than divided. In other words, the Second Isaiah, in our view, is an organic sequel and supplement to the First; as if a later prophet, musing in the same vein, had taken up the theme where the earlier one had laid it down, and rounded it out to a finish. And so the two parts, while set in a different scene and subtending two

widely sundered epochs of time, are in reality one book, with one homogeneous scheme of thought, and with a clear coördination and consecution of elements. To the just articulation of this organic scheme the work of Isaiah of Jerusalem is as essential, and as lucidly contributive, as is that of his supplementer, the seer of the Exile.

The Vision and the Word

What makes the Book of Isaiah as a whole so sublime is the fact that by its coördinated parts it covers the whole range of the prophetic period. Beginning some years before the fall of the northern kingdom, weathering a vital crisis in Judah, and culminating as the Chaldean exile is felt to be near its end, it groups its main subject matter round two historical focal points: the Assyrian invasions, culminating with that of Sennacherib in 701 B.C.; and the campaigns of Cyrus, bringing near the fall of Babylon in 538 B.C. and the prospective release of the Jewish people from exile. Between these points there lies, with its generous horizons of educative time and experience, well-nigh the whole landscape of literary prophecy. To traverse this in spiritual realization requires more than a sage's or statesman's genius: it calls for a divinely touched sense of the mind and purpose of God. Such a sense this Book of Isaiah evinces beyond any other Scripture book. It is a blend of apocalyptic and historically conditioned prevision. Both these qualities seem recognized in the titles appended to the body of the prophecy. In chapter i, 1, it is called a Vision: "the vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz,"—a designation which we find in only two other prophetic books, Obadiah and Nahum. What this term distinctively means, in Isaiah's case, will come up for consideration later.[1] The opening chapter, giving the ground and design underlying this Vision, is a fitting introduction to the whole book, though it may have contemplated only the time of Isaiah of Jerusalem. It lays a foundation on which ages of prophecy can build.

[1] Under the heading, "Isaiah's Vision of Destiny," pp. 189 ff.

After this initial chapter, however, a new start is made, under a title which names the prophecy a Word: "the word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw" (ii, 1). It seems thus to draw in the matter of the book from the apocalyptic to the local and historic; like the vision title but in a more restricted sense it purports to be "concerning Judah and Jerusalem." This title, unlike Micah's, seems to ignore the northern kingdom (his was "concerning Samaria and Jerusalem," Mic. i, 1); but in the prophecy itself some of the most notable oracles are connected with the fortunes and character of that people (see Isa. ix, 8–x, 4; xvii, 1–11; xxviii, 1–6). Mainly, however, the prophet is called to be the spokesman of Jehovah for the capital and its grave needs in this time of stress.

It is with this Isaiah of Jerusalem, Isaiah the son of Amoz, and his "word," that the present section is concerned.

What Micah sees from the country and from the point of view of the common man, the man on the under side,

The Situation in Jerusalem

Isaiah sees from his station among the aristocratic classes in Jerusalem: a people materialized by luxury and heartless greed (v, 8–12; 18–23), eager for foreign customs and fads (ii, 6–9), mixing their formal worship with iniquity (i, 10–14), and obtuse to spiritual things (vi, 9, 10). In dealing with this situation he sets over against it, as does Micah, the contrasted destiny of the latter days (ii, 2–4); but he applies its lessons in inverse order. Micah works up to it from the deplorable conditions of the day (Mic. i–iii); Isaiah, taking it as a literary point of departure, works downward and outward from it to the details of the utter contrast that he feels around him, the thankless conditions with which his prophetic labors must deal (ii–v). Employing for this mostly the impassioned rhythm of public discourse, he sums up the situation with a song (v, 1–7); in which he depicts a well-located vineyard, which was provided with every care and cultivation for producing choice

grapes, and yet brought forth only wild grapes, — as if all the endeavor to improve upon untamed nature were in vain. "For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts," his song concludes, "is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry" (v, 7).

For such a condition of things he can only prophesy disaster and gloom (v, 30); and he is not sparing in the tremendous power of his invective; but as an alleviating offset he always keeps in mind the alternative nobler conduct and destiny reserved for the sterling remnant which is to constitute the redeeming element of the true Israel (i, 18–20; vi, 12, 13; iv, 2–6).

Isaiah's Call and its Object

By its first title the prophecy of Isaiah is assigned to "the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (i, 1); but it was not until the year of King Uzziah's death (see vi, 1), which occurred in 740 B.C., that he had the particular vision from which he received his call to the prophetic office. The call, with its awesome experience of a mystic contact with Jehovah and his ministering spirits, imparted a new sense to the prophet and to prophecy — the sense of Jehovah's holiness. His distinctive designation of Jehovah, as the personal Being whose spokesman he is called to be, is "the Holy One of Israel." The primary meaning of holiness is separateness: from all moral evil, with its corrupting and entangling influences, from all that is prone or indifferent to such evil; a separateness of which Jehovah is the eternal and living Pattern. To make this idea lucid, to make it prevail in a perverse and corrupted nation, and to enforce men's relation thereto, is the long and laborious task of Isaiah, — a task which can hardly count its first success for forty years, and then only by what seems a miraculous event.

To put the matter in more modern terms, we may say the object of Isaiah's prophetic task was to induce in his

people a spiritual realization of God and truth and duty. This, a hard undertaking in any case, was supremely hard in a people whose worship was ritual and formal and whose ideals were materialized to worldly pursuits and standards. They had developed no sense for spiritual values; and such sense could be induced only with difficulty. It is with a realization of this difficulty that the Lord sends him: "Go, and tell this people, 'Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.' Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed" (vi, 9, 10). The same obtuseness to spiritual truth was later recognized by Jesus (see Matt. xiii, 14, 15), and by St. Paul (see Acts xxviii, 25–27; Rom. xi, 8); it was, as in Isaiah's case, simply their encounter with the fact that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned (cf. 1 Cor. ii, 14, 15). We have noted that Micah attributes a like blindness to the prophets of the time (Mic. iii, 5–8); Hosea saw the same in the northern kingdom (Hos. ix, 7, 8); Isaiah too has much discouragement over the slowness and stupidity of the people in getting their spiritual sense awake (Isa. xxix, 9–12). But to keep at it, "line upon line," to induce true spiritual insight among a blind people who think they see, is for a whole generation the prophet's thankless labor.

In bringing about this quickened spiritual attitude Isaiah must work with the social and political conditions of the time; and to this end must address himself to the concrete crises and issues that come before the kingdom of Judah. Accordingly, from the beginning of his work he has to concern himself much with the administrative and diplomatic affairs of the state; his family position seems to give him the right. He is in fact the wisest statesman of his time — an almost solitary figure committed through a long and troublous period to a deep-founded, consistent, far-seeing

policy. Encompassed by the arrogant yet temporizing opportunism of kings, nobles, and seers, wherein "all vision is become . . . as the words of a book that is sealed" (xxix, 11), and all religion "a commandment of men learned by rote" (xxix, 13, margin), he alone has the insight to see straight and clear and through. He concentrates his prophetic statesmanship, however, on one main object. His fundamental effort is to set up in the torpid soul of the nation a current of active spiritual energy responsive to Jehovah, "the Holy One of Israel." Another name for this energy is faith; and, indeed, Isaiah is distinctively the prophet of faith, the first of the prophets to lay vigorous emphasis on this virtue. It is the vital element with which the life of the spirit begins; it is the element by which Israel shall be delivered from national perils and redeemed to a noble mission in the earth.

Our limits of space forbid a detailed account of Isaiah's wonderful campaign on behalf of faith, and his far-sighted effort thereby to bring eventually to pass his vision of a clean Jerusalem, purified, as he expresses it, "by the spirit of justice, and by the spirit of burning" (iv, 4). In this campaign he has first to deal with the faithless and shallow king Ahaz (vii); who, dismayed by the coalition of Syria and Ephraim against his realm, and already hankering after the æsthetic shows of heathen cultus (cf. 2 Kings xvi, 10–13), had evidently no sincere loyalty to Jehovah and was planning to invite aid from Assyria. To him and his house the prophet's severe word of warning is, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (vii, 9). Then later, when the Assyrian peril is imminent, and the leaders are nervously planning alliances with Egypt and Ethiopia, the prophet's plea for faith in Jehovah is still more emphatic. "Behold," his word from Jehovah is, "I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation: he that believeth

shall not be in haste" (xxviii, 16). Such faith, working by "justice the line, and righteousness the plummet," is to be the nation's wisdom and strength; fortified by its quiet confidence they need no alien help; or as he phrases it: "In returning and rest shall ye be saved: in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (xxx, 15). Through many shifts of sentiment and policy, and in spite of scorn and contempt (cf. xxviii, 9–13), he counseled this self-respecting self-reliant loyalty to Jehovah; it is the keynote of his prophetic message. And when at length the long-threatened crisis came, and King Hezekiah, who though sincerely disposed to Isaiah's faith lacked a resolute personality, was confronted with Sennacherib's arrogant demand for surrender, the prophet, coming forward, hurled defiance at the imperial invader in an answer which tested and exalted his faith in the eyes of the world (xxxvii, 21–32; cf. 2 Chron. xxxii, 23). The sequel was the miraculous intervention on the part of Jehovah himself by which he vindicated the prophet's word. Jerusalem was prophesied inviolate, and proved so. Jehovah's care for his people was revealed, in spite of their lack of trust. It was a momentous step in the planting of spiritual religion in Israel; a starting point for the growth, through the succeeding century (701–597), of a character which, when the actual captivity came, would find a people strong and ready.

His Symbolic Undertone

We have called Isaiah's prophecy a blend of the historical and the apocalyptic;[1] which is another way of saying he had in mind two fields of vision, or rather two ranges in one field, like concentric circles: an immediate and a far-reaching, or, in other words, a range of objective circumstances and events and a range of inner tendencies and forces. The horizon of the immediate range, which was in the more specific purview of Isaiah of Jerusalem, was the Assyrian menace and invasion. The

[1] See above, p. 168; and for apocalyptic, see p. 147, note 2.

far-reaching range, for which the smaller was a kind of gestation period, had no horizon except the limitless purpose of God for all lands and times; it contained the initial promise of the vision which we see perpetuated in the Second Isaiah.

To warn and prepare the nation for the Assyrian crisis no language of symbolism is needed; the literal situation, with its civic, political, and religious phases, calls merely for the plainest and most trenchant speech. Accordingly, the prophet employs merely the impassioned terms of exhortation and admonition, intense to fit the urgency of the case, and with such imagery as will give vigor and thrust. It is in the masterly use of such literary power, mounting at times to wonderful reaches of sublimity, that Isaiah ranks among the consummate authors of the world. He did indeed employ a kind of dramatic means to enforce his message; but these acts were rather an acted oracle than a symbol. Long before the peril was imminent in Judah, perhaps as early as the time of Joel and Amos (cf. Joel ii, 32; Amos v, 15), he had named a son Shear-jashub, "a remnant shall return," — a son old enough to accompany the prophet when King Ahaz was meditating submission to Assyria (vii, 3); and this name embodies the central word of Isaiah's message. Soon after that interview too, when as it would seem the troubles of the realm were deemed happily adjusted, the prophet named another son Maher-shalal-hash-baz, "spoil speedeth, prey hasteth," — a name meant to proclaim the imminence of the woe which would overtake the northern kingdom (viii, 1–4). For the rest, however, his thankless task, through a generation of contingency and suspense, was to bring a fat-hearted, unspiritual people to their senses as wards of the Holy One of Israel. As expressed in the terms of his call, he had to keep at this arduous duty until the land was reduced well-nigh to extremities, and there was left only a remnant whom he calls "the holy seed . . . the stock thereof," from which, as from the stump of an oak,

"whose stock remaineth," the hope of the future was to come (vi, 11–13). But when we understand whom he means by the remnant, this designation is not figurative but literal.

NOTE. *The Calamity of the Land.* The literal distress referred to in vi, 11, 12, depicted again in the introductory chapter as the nadir point from which the upward movement of the whole prophecy is to be reckoned (i, 7–9), was doubtless the Assyrian invasion by Sennacherib in 701 B.C., in the course of which, according to his inscription, many towns in the frontiers of Judah (Micah's district; cf. Mic. i, 8–16) were devastated, more than 200,000 captives were deported, and Jerusalem was beleaguered. How Isaiah met this calamity, with what conviction and faith, we have seen.

Throughout this moral and civic strain of prophecy, however, beginning at his first encounter with the recreant house of David (cf. vii, 13), there runs an undertone of what may be called symbolic presage; though whether more fitly termed symbolic or spiritually intrinsic is a fair question. In the use of this symbolic undertone Isaiah and his contemporary Micah are quite at one,[1] Isaiah's being the more articulate and finished. Both shape their ideas to a coming golden age; both have at heart the worth and mission of the remnant; both are zealous for the daughter of Zion; both are deeply conscious of a gestation period in Israel "until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth" (Mic. v, 3); and out of the visions of both there emerges a Personage to whom is ascribed, in terms suited to each prophet's circumstances, a leadership kingly and pastoral, a Prince of peace to high and lowly. It is in the masterly handling and coördination of these symbolic elements, if such they may be called, that we get at once the direction of Israel's noblest destiny and the substantial beginnings of Messianic prophecy. No other prophet (except his supplementer the Second Isaiah) has contributed such essential meanings to Jehovah's revealed will and purpose.

[1] See above, p. 161.

Compared with the values involved in this symbolic undertone, the Assyrian menace was but an incident, a passing episode, to be faced and surmounted on the way to a nobler destiny.

A somewhat detailed account of the Messianic strain in which this shapes itself is in order here; because it is the element by which the Book of Isaiah [1] is best known and which has taken the most vital hold on all the ages succeeding him.

I have called it a symbolic undertone because it deals with the evolution of a race's ordained destiny in terms of the birth and maturing of a person, or as we may say more abstractly, of a divinely quickened personality. It is, so to say, the hidden history of the "holy seed" of Israel, which when the spiritual core of the nation is reduced to a seemingly insignificant remnant is "the stock thereof" (vi, 13); a history given in glimpses as salient as the needs of the dim and perilous times require. The prophet's cryptic announcement began when he gave to King Ahaz the sign for which the latter had neither sense nor desire: the sign of "God with us" (Immanuel; see vii, 14), a sign to be apprehended not by such as he but by a spiritual intuition. Touched with a mystic penetration, the prophet was aware of a thrill, a stirring of new life in Israel which he associated with the true daughter of Zion, and interpreted as the token of a new spiritual birth; or as he expressed it, "Behold, the *'alma* [2] (maiden) shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This word, which for the prophet names not a symbol but a real fact, is used

[1] One strong element of the essential unity of the Book of Isaiah is the fact that this element is carried on continuously and progressively in both First and Second Isaiah; see Chapter VI, 1, 3.

[2] This is not the usual name for virgin; it means a marriageable maiden; and the definite article with it seems to refer to someone already known or identifiable. Like our Lord's parables, however, it is meant for those who have "ears to hear."

thereafter to enforce the prediction that when the flood of Assyrian invasion shall sweep through the land and men shall be inclined to dubious coalitions against it, there will be enough of divine power in this new birth, enough of spiritual firmness, to withstand the impact (see the repetition of the name, viii, 8, 10). With this mystic announcement, however, he joins a literal one, predicting with formal solemnity the birth of his second son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz (viii, 1–4); of whom, together with his other son Shear-jashub, he affirms for those whose sense is duller, "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in Mount Zion" (viii, 18).

This sign is for the "house of David" (cf. vii, 2, 13) and the people of Judah; but with their faithlessness to Jehovah's law and their craze for necromancy and divination (cf. ii, 6) they are only in the way of distress and darkness (viii, 19–22). It is not from their quarter that the first light shall come, but from the northern lands that were first invaded (cf. 2 Kings xv, 29), "Galilee [circuit or district] of the nations" (ix, 1–5). There, as he prophesies, a Child is already born, who shall receive divine names, and "of the increase of [whose] government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever" (ix, 6, 7). As of the growth and fruitage of the remnant, so of this event the prophet says, "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (cf. xxxvii, 32).

The next announcement is not of a new-born child, but of One who has reached the estate of young manhood; and it comes after the prophet has assured his nation that the Assyrian is only an agency in Jehovah's hand for the punishment of Israel, a scourge whose arrogant function will pass, though not until it has swept through Israel

almost to Zion (x, 5–19, 28–32), and only a remnant shall be left who "shall no more again lean upon him that smote them," — as did Ahaz when he invited their aid (vs. 20). A severe destruction and humiliation must precede the coming of this Personage (x, 20–23, 33, 34). And then his origin is traced not to David but to David's father Jesse and his stock; which, like Micah's prophecy, identifies him with Bethlehem, Jesse's abode (xi, 1; cf. Mic. v, 2). To the wonderful character ascribed to this "shoot out of the stock of Jesse" is appended a glowing description of regenerated nature (xi, 6–9), and then the universalized prediction: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious" (xi, 10). A prophecy of return from exile and dispersion follows, with restored harmony between the discordant sections of Israel (xi, 11–16).

One more announcement belongs to the same chain of predictions, though it goes a step beyond the Messianic individual. It is of the Messianic realm. It comes in the part of Isaiah where the prophet is working most strenuously to bring princes and leaders to their right mind, as they are nervously groping for human devices against the Assyrian peril now imminent. Whether the timid piety and sincerity of Hezekiah did anything to color the ideal is only conjectural. It is the picture of a perfected realm wherein, under the reign of a righteous king and just princes, men's eyes shall be open to see things as they are and their tongues unloosed to call things by their right names; in other words, where a full-orbed personality shall exert its gracious power among men, "and a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land" (xxxii, 1–8). In this noble portrayal of ideal civic conditions, one of the most

impressive passages of the Old Testament, Isaiah of Jerusalem brings to its climax the symbolic undertone by which he reveals the Messianic values germinating under the surface of history and giving assurance of a redeemed and enlightened mankind.

IV

The Crisis Met and Weathered. In the middle of the Book of Isaiah, following upon a portion (xxxiv, xxxv) in which, as is his wont, the prophet's vision broadens into apocalypse, there is inserted a section of narrative prose (xxxvi–xxxix), which, recounting the issue of the Assyrian suspense and crisis, serves with eminent fitness to round off the prophecy of the First Isaiah. These chapters, substantially identical with chapters xviii, 13, to xx, 19, of the Second Book of Kings, are evidently from the same hand. Whether Isaiah or some other historian was the writer, and whether inserted here from Kings or *vice versa*, are interesting but somewhat profitless questions. In the condensed history of the Sennacherib campaign given in 2 Chron. xxxii, both "the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz" and the "book of the kings of Judah and Israel" are referred to as authority for the more extended account which the annalist does not profess to give (2 Chron. xxxii, 32); and in a previous passage Isaiah the son of Amoz is named as the historian of an earlier reign (2 Chron. xxvi, 22). It seems not unfair, therefore, to attribute to the seer-archivist Isaiah this section common to Isaiah and Kings; it is at any rate in eminently fitting place and function, and quite in harmony with the prophet's general plan and message.

In order to realize from the Biblical point of view how this momentous crisis of Israel's history was met and weathered, we will remember that the prophet had in mind an event of both near and remote significance, which could

not all be compassed by visible facts. It was to be a deliverance at once immediate and unfinal; and beyond it, adumbrated in the whole symbolic undertone, was the foregleam of spiritual enlightenment and redemption. There was to be in it an element felt as divine: an enlargement of the inner life the germs of which were already active in the nation. "For," said the prophet to the incredulous scoffers, "the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it. For Jehovah will rise up as in mount Perazim, he will be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act" (xxviii, 20, 21). But it was not of the unbelieving nobles alone that he was mindful; not only of those who by the marvelous outcome must be made to see, but also of that hidden, unnoticed class who already had it in them to believe. In other words, his prophecy was concerned alike with the welfare of the realm and the destiny of the remnant. And the history is brought to a pass where the interests of both these are centered in his one personality.

On the Part of the Realm

As the crisis approached Isaiah, by a tremendous venture of faith, staked his whole prophetic credit on two concrete issues: the inviolability of Jerusalem against the onset of Sennacherib (xxxvii, 33, 34), and less outspokenly, the perpetuity of the Davidic throne and sovereignty (see ix, 7; xvi, 5; xxxviii, 5; cf. lv, 3). Both these elements of his faith came to crucial test at different times in his career, and for the truth of both reassuring signs from Jehovah were vouchsafed.

For meeting the Assyrian onset neither king, princes, nor people were keyed up to the faith that breathed through every utterance of the prophet. When, in the early months of the invasion the fortified cities of Judah were taken, King Hezekiah tried to buy immunity for his capital by

paying an enormous tribute, stripping the temple of its gold decorations to do it; a fact recorded in the history of the kings (2 Kings xviii, 13–16) and in the inscription of Sennacherib, but not in the Book of Isaiah. When, however, in spite of this the summons was sent back for surrender and arrogantly presented, recourse was had as in a last extremity to the prophet; and his response was a magnificent message of defiance and prediction of disaster to the Assyrian king: "The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. . . . Because of thy raging against me, and because thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. . . . For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake" (xxxvii, 21–35). The prediction was signally fulfilled by a miraculous pestilence in Sennacherib's army, followed by an ignominious withdrawal to his own land and eventually by his assassination (xxxvii, 36–38; cf. vss. 7, 34).[1] This was the palpable sign for the blear-eyed nation that must be made to see, a token that their God was real and had them, in spite of their recreancy, in His care.

The Davidic throne and dynasty too, concerning which there had been much cherished prophecies (cf. 2 Sam. vii, 13, 16), had its perils, which did not miss the reassuring sign from Jehovah. It was out of the conspiracy to dethrone King Ahaz, it will be remembered, and to set up an alien in his place, thus deposing the Davidic line, that the sign of Immanuel arose, which began the Messianic series confirming "the sure mercies of David" (cf. lv, 3). This of

[1] There is some obscurity in the accounts of this invasion, with its two demands of surrender; and it is maintained by many that the histories in 2 Kings and Isaiah combine the campaign of 701 B.C. with another made about a decade later, — the retreat belonging to one and the pestilence to the other.

course promises perpetuity in a spiritual rather than political sense; but it is all the more real for that. The later case of King Hezekiah's mortal sickness, however, healed by special act of Jehovah (xxxviii, 1–8), had a more direct bearing; for if fifteen years were added to the king's life (vs. 5) the sickness occurred three years before there was an heir to the throne (cf. 2 Kings xxi, 1). This manifestation of Jehovah's care and purpose would be of great value to the king's timid and wavering faith, as was the deliverance of the city to the nation in general.

The last note of prophecy from the First Isaiah leaves the way open in an interesting manner for the supplementary matter of the Second Isaiah. It comes from Hezekiah's one serious lapse from devout wisdom (cf. 2 Chron. xxxii, 31) when he, perhaps with an alliance in mind, showed his kingdom's treasures to Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon (xxxix); which gives the prophet occasion, a century before the prediction is fulfilled, to prophesy the Chaldean captivity, for which the succeeding century is to be a spiritual and educative preparation, and near the close of which the Isaian strain of prophecy is resumed. With this prediction the work of Isaiah of Jerusalem, as we have it, is done. How long he lived after he had done so much to meet and weather the Assyrian crisis is unknown. Tradition has it that he suffered martyrdom under King Manasseh, the son and successor of Hezekiah. No nobler martyr ever lived; no greater literary and spiritual force in a critical time.

In Behalf of the Remnant

From the time very early in his prophetic career when Isaiah named his eldest son Shear-jashub, "a remnant shall return," the character and fortunes of the remnant, whatever we are to understand by that term, were close to his heart. In a true sense we may say the idea of the remnant strikes the keynote of Isaiah's message. This idea is closely connected with the imagery and terminology used by both Isaiah and Micah in what I have

called the symbolic undertone. It is of importance, therefore, that we consider what the prophet's remnant is, and what he means by its return.

"Except Jehovah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant," he says in his introductory chapter, "we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (i, 9). There had not been enough righteous in those ancient cities to save them (cf. Gen. xviii, 22–33). In this city of Jerusalem, so full of "wickedness and worship," there were barely enough to warrant escape from the fate that overtook them. Then, when the prophet, going on to denounce the "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah" for the crass iniquities to which their elaborate rituals furnish no restraint, pleads like Micah for a plain religion (i, 10–17), and when, receiving his call, he feels the torpid obtuseness to spiritual things which prevents the people from turning again and being healed (vi, 10), we can realize by contrast whom he means by the remnant. Not those who will eventually return from literal exile — though the imminence of captivity furnishes the symbol — but those who have it in them to turn from darkness to light, from iniquity to righteousness (cf. xxx, 15). It is the few who in the midst of dirt have kept clean, who in the riot of corruption have retained a godly integrity, who in the haste and turmoil of invasion have kept their faith. The saving nucleus, the redeeming element, in a degenerate state, it is they who, when the disintegration gets beneath the grade of moral and spiritual survival, "shall return," and shall be the hope of Israel.

In tracing the ideal mission of this remnant, Isaiah, as we have seen, employs the symbolism of the begetting and rearing of a child; beginning with the holy seed and the predicted Immanuel child, and going on to the completed Messianic picture. This is his idea individualized until it becomes the ruling personal power at the heart of men and

nations; an idea which can be realized only in some indefinite future. But meanwhile this regenerating spirit must be cultivated and distributed. The child must as it were become children; the remnant increased to become a growing and eventually a controlling power in a renewed nation. For this he labors, to this he shapes his symbolical conceptions; it is as if the daughter of Zion were in travail to bring forth a worthy offspring. We have seen with what thankless results the prophet has labored for a sincere faith. In the midst of his endeavor he complains: "Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain and crieth out in her pangs; so we have been before thee, O Jehovah. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen" (xxvi, 17, 18). The spiritual birth, if hard in the individual, is correspondingly so on the national scale.

King Hezekiah, a man of fine and devout but not resolute personality, was a sincere and consistent disciple of Isaiah; and it seems clear that he had adopted and was trying to follow out the prophet's ideas. Not only was his personal trust in Jehovah sincere and steadfast; he had sought also to win his people from idolatrous superstition (see 2 Kings xviii, 3–6). All that is recorded of him is of very different tenor from the attitude of the princes described in Isa. xxviii, 14–16. When the summons to surrender came, the appeal that he sent to the prophet was expressed not in political nor diplomatic language but in prophetic terms, the very terms indeed of the prophet's symbolic undertone. "This day," he said, "is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of contumely; for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be Jehovah thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke

the words which Jehovah thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left" (xxxvii, 3, 4). It would seem from this that he shared in the prophet's idea of a new life to be born, a regenerate Israel, and that his sympathies were not with the dominant majority but with the remnant. But the nation, as such, had not yet reached that assured stage of spiritual development, that integrity of character and conscience, where it could afford to surrender. It was in truth too early for Judah to enter upon its distinctive mission in the world. A century of reprieve was needed for Israel's redeeming personality to be born and reach the vigor by which it could cope with exile and dispersion. The saving remnant must become a determining energy and redeeming element. So Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance was heard, and the prophet's intrepid faith was vindicated. The Assyrian peril was removed in a way that to Judah had all the effect of a miracle;[1] and the prophet's prediction was: "The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion they that shall escape" (xxxvii, 31, 32). The prophecy of the First Isaiah, symbolized from his earliest activity in the name of his eldest son, still held good, and with it the idealized promise of One who was portrayed as Child, as Conqueror, and as the King of a regenerate and enlightened realm.

[1] May not the passage in Second Isaiah (Isa. lxvi, 7–9) describing the new birth of a nation be a reminiscence of this wonderful deliverance and its effect, expressed in the same imagery?

CHAPTER V

AFTER THE REPRIEVE

[From 701 to 586 B.C.]

WITH the sudden release of Jerusalem and Judah from the long-standing menace of Assyria, in 701 B.C., there came a corresponding revulsion. It was like opening the eyes of the nation to the true source and secret of their welfare; a visible proof that trust in Jehovah was not misplaced. For the first time since the cloud of invasion and tyranny had first appeared on the horizon, in the days of Amos and Hosea, the people of Jehovah could breathe freely. True, the revulsion caused by Sennacherib's retreat came to a people scarred and crippled. The northern kingdom had fallen, and exiles from it were scattered in the lands beyond the Euphrates (cf. 2 Kings xviii, 11). Judah had been ravaged with the loss of forty-six towns and over two hundred thousand inhabitants (cf. Isa. i, 7; vi, 11, 12; and the Taylor cylinder). The nation, when not intriguing with Egypt and Ethiopia against Assyria, had been obliged to buy off the invader by the payment of enormous tribute (cf. 2 Kings xviii, 14–16). But now, for a time at least, the cloud of anxiety and suspense was lifted. The people whose lands had been ravaged could sow their fields again and resume their peaceful occupations; it was the sign, Isaiah told them, that the long peril was over (xxxvii, 30). Men of thought and letters could now turn their attention to the deeper meanings that lay infolded in the nation's strange experience. The miraculous deliverance, with the spiritual emancipation it caused, was one of the cardinal

points of Israel's history; it opened a century's sound and healthy growth. "Israel," says Professor George Adam Smith, "never wholly lost the grace of the baptism wherewith she was baptized in 701."[1]

An Enlarged Literary Consciousness

The revulsion found the people's heart not wholly unprepared for its purposed avails. Isaiah had indeed worked at cross-purposes with a stupid and perverse aristocracy; but with the remnant whose spiritual susceptibilities were awake he was in hearty fellowship and sympathy, and he had their faith and good will in return. It is of this element of the nation's life, indeed, that we are mainly to predicate the sound and healthy growth just mentioned. In his effort to create out of a degenerate nation a nation regenerate, it was with the remnant, the hidden repository of the nation's better self, that he must begin; and, as we have seen, he symbolized that beginning by the predicted birth of the Immanuel child.[2] It was the birth of a forward-looking, resilient faith; and like an infant that faith must be nursed and tended until its assured life could induce in the nation at large a current of new energy and vision. Such was Isaiah's nobly conceived yet thankless task; whose effects could not well be seen until with the sudden release from the Assyrian peril an encouraging access of communal faith was precipitated, as it were, from solution. But while he was thus nursing to power the spiritual and prophetic sense in his people, another effect of the movement was making itself felt in the enlarged literary consciousness which, so far as we can trace, came in with the career of Isaiah and the reign of King Hezekiah; a consciousness which, touched with the prophetic spirit, wrought to revive and enrich the various lines of literary activity, poetic, didactic, and legislative.

[1] Smith, "The Book of Isaiah" (in The Expositor's Bible), Vol. I, p. 365.

[2] See above, p. 176.

It is the object of the present chapter to take note of this literary movement from the time of its great initiator Isaiah to the beginning of the Chaldean exile — a period of something over a century.

I. Men of Insight at Work

The sad dearth of spiritual insight — or what is called vision — in the Jewish nation of the time calls forth bitter complaint alike from Micah (cf. Mic. iii, 5–7) and Isaiah. We have seen with what keenness the latter senses the contrasted density of his people's mind as soon as the live coal from the altar has touched his lips (vi, 10); it is the materialized national consciousness against which he has to struggle all his life. Later in his career he puts his complaint into somewhat more definite terms. "For Jehovah," he says, "hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers, hath he covered. And all vision is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, 'Read this, I pray thee'; and he saith, 'I cannot, for it is sealed': and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, 'Read this, I pray thee'; and he saith, 'I am not learned'" (xxix, 10–12). Going on then to give the reason for this torpid state of things, he explains that their service of Jehovah is lip service with no heart in it, and that their fear of God is a theoretical fear, a commandment of men learned by rote (xxix, 13). When therefore the purpose of God comes to pass, there is no ability in the men of culture and intellect to understand and appropriate it.

A strong indictment this, and unless we allow for Isaiah's prophetic point of view and intensity of conviction rather more sweeping than the case warrants. The prophet had more supporters, perhaps, than he was aware of: men who

in their way felt the stirring of the times and if not by vision or by creating new ideas, yet by conserving the undying values of the old, contributed their quota to the volume of literary and spiritual activity. Let us take note of these, as evidences of their work come to light in the history and the literature.

I

Isaiah's Vision of Destiny. At the head of the list, however, must be placed the name of the prophet whose utterances are the soul of the whole movement. We have already considered Isaiah's "word" for his land and generation;[1] but his book as a whole is called "the Vision," and rightly so, whether the name was given early or late. The work of Isaiah is referred to under that name as authority for "the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his good deeds," in 2 Chron. xxxii, 32; but whether Second Isaiah was joined with the First when that book was written is uncertain. By Ecclesiasticus too, who attributes the whole book to Isaiah, he is called "great and faithful in his vision" (Ecclus. xlviii, 22). It is as a vision that the body of Isaianic prophecy is known and valued by later generations; or as Ecclesiasticus puts it, "he showed the things that should be to the end of time, and the hidden things or ever they came" (Ecclus. xlviii, 22). As our next step in the study of Isaiah, therefore, let us here consider, as we have proposed,[2] the vision element of his prophecy; the pervading trait, indeed, which from the beginning charged his words with power.

To get at the enlarged sense in which the term "vision" is here to be understood, we may glance at the two other prophetic books to which the title is given: the books of Obadiah and Nahum. In still another book too, the Book of Habakkuk, though that title is not given at the beginning,

[1] See above, pp. 167 ff. [2] See above, p. 168.

the vision character is prominent (see Hab. ii, 1–3), and the general tone of the prophecy corresponds. In all these books we note one common trait: they deal not with the sins and calamities of Israel, or with her civic and religious affairs, but with the character and destiny of other nations: Obadiah with Edom, Nahum with Nineveh, Habakkuk taking occasion from Chaldea, whose approach is imminent in his time, but really concerned more with the spiritual condition of the world at large. In other words, their horizon was broadened: their vision was touched with the sense of the greater world beyond the confines of the Judean land, a world where, whatever its prestige or material might, the same forces of human and divine nature were at work as at home, and where as at home character and destiny were a calculable sequence of cause and effect. That was a great truth for the teachers of a small and harassed people to realize. Of all these so-called visions, however, the Book of Isaiah is far and away the most luminous and comprehensive. Not only the earliest in time, it is also the type and pioneer of all this species of prophecy. This large vision character is evident from the outset. We have seen how Isaiah the son of Amoz begins his "word" with the prediction that in the latter days "the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii, 2–4); and how in consequence of the spiritual power and grace flowing from this center the nations shall learn righteousness and unlearn war. This is the real theme, the ever-potent keynote of his book; it projects his whole prophecy on the world scale. He has indeed to work with the civic and religious affairs of his time and land; has to nurse the embryotic faith of a remnant; has to keep the city inviolate and the Davidic dynasty intact; but in all these temporal issues he keeps the larger ideal bright and true, and out of them he evolves

The Broadened Horizon

the wonderful concept of a Personage, an individual Sovereign, in whose wisdom and power the ideal may be made real. The whole section of the book comprised in the first twelve chapters maps out, as it were, the field of this vision in its relation to Israel. And if in his generation the son of Amoz must needs leave the story of the vision only half told, yet like the ball of the gamester he leaves it in position for the next play.

So far as to the general tone and pressure of the First Isaiah's prophecy. The literary make-up of the book as we have it, whether determined by him or by later editors and supplementers, fully justifies the title "vision" as applied to the whole. The three main divisions into which the book naturally falls — like three acts in a mighty five-act drama — are all led up to and culminate in apocalyptic vaticinations and songs (chaps. xii, xxiv–xxvii, xxxiv–xxxv), all expanding the specific prophecies of their sections into the more spacious proportions of world vision. The middle section of these (chaps. xiii–xxvii, let us call it Act II) is quite in the vision character exemplified in Obadiah and Nahum, — consisting as it mainly does of a series of oracles on the nations which have had relations with Judah; in which oracles their character and destiny are assessed according to the same spiritual principles that govern the prophet. Those nations, like Judah, are in the care of and subject to the judgments of Jehovah of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel. Such is the broadened horizon that with the vision of Isaiah has entered into the purview of prophecy.

NOTES. 1. *The Utterance of the Vision.* Closely connected with the term "vision" another word now appears in prophecy: the word "burden" or "oracle." It is indeed the first title of Nahum (that prophecy has two titles, Nah. i, 1), and the only title of Habakkuk (Hab. i, 1). This word (Heb. *massa'*, lit. "a lifting up," as of a song or oracular utterance) is first used in this sense by Isaiah, who in chapters xiii to xxiii of his book prefixes it to a long series of utterances, all of the same general character. The word "burden" is to the

word "vision" as announcement to a heard or seen revelation. The idea of vision and burden is described in a realistic way by Habakkuk: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and I will look forth to see what he will speak with me, and what I shall answer concerning my complaint. And Jehovah answered me, and said, 'Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it'" (Hab. ii, 1, 2). A similar realistic touch is given by Isaiah, in his announcement of the fall of Babylon (Isa. xxi, 6–9), in "the burden of the desert of the sea."

2. *The Plan of the Book of Isaiah.* It may be well to set down here, for convenience of reference, the main divisions into which, in my view, the Book of Isaiah falls. My literary study of it, as completed, has resulted in my regarding it as essentially one theme, like a sublime dramatic movement, in five acts, in which the action is carried on not by dialogue or dramatis personæ but by the prophet as a kind of chorus, as in the Greek drama. It is of course in a highly accommodated sense that this analogy of the drama is suggested.

The following outline is here submitted:

PROEM, i

ACT I. The latent peril and potency in Israel and Judah, i–xii.
ACT II. The inner torsion and sterility of the nations, xiii–xxvii.
ACT III. The first onset: the Assyrian crisis, xxviii–xxxix.

INTERMEZZO AND SHIFT OF SCENE, xl

ACT IV. The second onset: the Chaldean experience, xli–lv.
ACT V. Clearing the way for a new universe, lvi–lxvi.

An analysis so condensed as this is of course not self-explaining; we must look to the book itself for that.

From the Higher Plane of Vision

Not only is the horizon of Isaiah's vision broadened from a provincial to a world outlook. The plane of vision also is so much higher that he can look down as it were from a third dimension into the heart of human nature, seeing the essential manhood, or the lack of it, in all mankind. He is the first to import into prophecy this extraordinarily penetrative power of spiritual vision; the first, and with his later collaborator the Second Isaiah, the ablest. We see this in the remarkable series of "burdens," or oracles, which in the second section

of his book (Act II, chaps. xiii–xxiii) take up one by one the character of each of the leading peoples with which Israel had relations. It is not merely because they are enemies of Israel that he denounces them, nor is his tone always denunciatory. It is as often in pity and promise. The plight of Babylon comes first,[1] as most typical and far-reaching (xiii, xiv); and he has in mind, apparently, not so much her military ferocity as her ancient culture, a culture that has made her the intellectual and spiritual exactress (see xiv, 4, margin) of the world. The day of Jehovah is at hand, and all her culture is of no avail to meet it (xiii, 6–8); her plight is spiritual sterility and impotence, — "I will make a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir" (xiii, 12). In the Second Isaiah this trait is taken up repeatedly and pushed to satire (cf. xli, 21–24; xlvii, 12–15). Of like nature are the indictments brought against other nations: pride and arrogancy in Moab (xvi, 6); spiritual leanness and barrenness in northern Israel (xvii, 4, 5); fatuous ideas and counsels in Egypt (xix, 11–15); and frivolous lack of foresight in his own city (xxii, 1–14), the place which, of all others, should be "the valley of vision." All these he regards, however, with the sympathy of a true missionary spirit, and from their fate extracts some connection with the enlightening influence of Israel. He has a good word even for Assyria; and in spite of the severity of chapter x, 5–19, admits that nation, after its work is done, to fellowship in Jehovah's great purpose: "In that day," he says, "shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work

[1] There are indications (if we ignore the heading) that the chapters on Babylon are by an exilic writer; but in all this section there is doubtless a predominating amount of Isaiah's work, and all is in his characteristic vein. We will remember that the assembling and completing of the book were done at a later period.

of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance'" (xix, 24, 25). It takes a vision both broad and deep, a vision tolerant with the outlasting grace of God, to utter such prophecies as this. And such is the vision of destiny opened and bravely maintained through his life by Isaiah the son of Amoz.

II

Stimulus of a Royal Patron. It is in Isaiah indeed that we find the central and dominant personal force of his generation; but it is not to be supposed that a literary utterance so mature as his was a strange or solitary phenomenon. An author connotes an audience; a new current of ideas, a fitting channel in which to run and prosper. Isaiah was not alone: we have already seen what an efficient work-fellow he had in his contemporary Micah. The two together succeeded in launching not only a new order of prophetic ideal but to some extent a mold of concepts, a prophetic terminology, for the era succeeding. We have seen also how, when the summons came from Sennacherib requiring the answer that should test Israel's faith, King Hezekiah's despondent message to Isaiah was couched in the terms of his prophetic vocabulary: "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (Isa. xxxvii, 3). We seem to see from this that King Hezekiah was quite in sympathy with the work of Isaiah, and sincerely desirous to share in the prophet's intrepid confidence, but perhaps had neither the backing of his nobles nor a large enough "remnant" of the people to make his faith an assured strength.

But the Assyrian crisis revealed only one aspect of the king's character. It was, in fact, not his relations with foreign affairs and invasions which stood as the chief distinction of Hezekiah's reign. It was rather his work in the domestic upbuilding of the kingdom, — work designed to promote a sounder religious and moral fiber in the heart

of the people. In this he would have the inspiration and support of the statesman-prophet Isaiah, who according to a Jewish tradition was his tutor in his younger days; but also as king he could furnish an important stimulus on his own part.

A Religious Clearing-up

We have noted the pleas of both Micah and Isaiah for a plain and common-sense religion, a religion that should be neither an ostentatious luxury nor a self-tormenting burden (Mic. vi, 8; Isa. i, 16). Both pleas were urged in the face of the religious chaos of the time; the people, especially the upper classes, being infatuated with a complex syncretism of idolatries and superstitions imported from the surrounding nations (see Isa. ii, 6–9), and their moral intuitions darkened by mediumship and necromancy (cf. Isa. viii, 19–22). There was sore need of a religion of plain sense; and Hezekiah's sympathies were sincerely in that direction. He began, it would seem, with the inveterate old superstitions which had clung to the worship of the country people since the time of Moses. "He removed the high places," the historian says, "and brake the pillars, and cut down the Asherah: and he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan," — that is, a piece of brass (2 Kings xviii, 4). This last item of his reform indicates his object: to clear away excrescences of worship and call things by their right names, — a step toward the honest view of life prophesied of the perfect realm wherein a king should reign in righteousness and princes rule in justice (Isa. xxxii, 4–8). It was, so far as it went, a movement toward both a religious and an intellectual clearing-up, an identification of religion with reason and sturdy sense. Reactions followed in the succeeding reign, for old errors and superstitions die hard; but the hidden effects of King Hezekiah's reform were as great in one way as were those of the more famous reform under King Josiah in another.

Another important and very characteristic undertaking of King Hezekiah is recorded by the Chronicler, who derives much of his later-written history from the Temple archives. It was a reorganization, or perhaps we may better say a resuscitation, of the Temple service, — since according to the same historian King Ahaz had shut the Temple doors (2 Chron. xxviii, 24). In connection with this work he instituted a great Passover celebration, the most notable since Solomon (2 Chron. xxx, 26) — a kind of reunion, or Old Home Week, for Israel, which was observed with such zest that the whole service was repeated (2 Chron. xxx, 23). To this reunion the people of the northern kingdom and of the region beyond Jordan were invited — another indication of Hezekiah's largeness of heart and good will — and a few complied, though the invitation was generally scorned (2 Chron. xxx, 1, 10–12). This, though somewhat crude and tentative, was a step toward that centralization of worship for which King Josiah's time, a century later, was better prepared; it was also a step toward that unity of the spirit which, beginning with a remnant, was destined some day to be the strength of Israel. And it was for such elemental virtues — unity of spirit, clarity of mind, loyalty to Jehovah — that Hezekiah afforded to his people, high and lowly, the stimulus of a royal patron.

III

Treasures from the Older Literature. Of the general literary activity of King Hezekiah's time not much is said; enough, however, to warrant a reasonable inference. A time which could support the wonderful creative utterance of an Isaiah, and which could respond though imperfectly to Hezekiah's mission of tolerance and good sense, would not be barren of literary fruitfulness and appreciation. There is reason to believe that in his love of liberal learning as

well as of religion, especially as a student and collector of the older stores of literature, he made his reign a period of intellectual activity beyond what had been known since the days of Solomon, and gave an impulse which during the succeeding century rivaled to a notable degree the matured scholarship of the Chaldean exile.

In an earlier chapter, tracing the primitive differentiation of literary activities,[1] we noted two native forms, the song and the mashal; forms inchoate and undergoing oral shaping in David's and Solomon's time, but destined in their finished development as psalms and proverbs to bear through centuries the stamp of these monarchs' names. We come in sight of these psalms and proverbs in King Hezekiah's reign and find that he and the men of his time bear an important part, perhaps a determinative part, in their collection and preservation.

The Collecting of Psalms

According to the Chronicler, when King Hezekiah rededicated the temple, the liturgical basis of the service was a full choral and orchestral accompaniment to the elaborate ritual of the sacrifice (see 2 Chron. xxix, 25-28). The ceremonial seems to have been observed with intensified zest from the long desuetude into which such services had fallen. Its prelude had been the reopening and cleansing of the sanctuary which Ahaz had so profaned; and itself was the prelude to the Passover season already mentioned, wherein an effort was made at an all-Israel reunion. All this was like a return to first principles; like a recourse to the wholesome traditions and personalities of the past. The orchestra, made up of the musical guilds of long standing, used the time-honored "instruments of David"; which instruments, it would seem, had made his name as famous for musical and inventive skill as is the name of Stradivarius or Guarnerius among music lovers

[1] See "Evolution of Literary Types and Functions," pp. 86 ff., above.

to-day (cf. Amos vi, 5). For the vocal part of the service the Levites were instructed to "sing praises unto Jehovah with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer" (2 Chron. xxix, 30). This introduces us to the two men who beyond all others are the classics in psalmody, — that blending of music with public praise and worship which was the distinctive art of the Hebrews. The two names had been associated since before the Temple was built, when at the first dedicatory service the national worship was inaugurated in a tent (1 Chron. xvi, 7). As late as the dedication of the rebuilt city wall after the return from exile they were still remembered: "For in the days of David and Asaph of old there was a chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God" (Neh. xii, 46). Thus in a very intimate sense the most revered king of Israel was identified with his people's common worship and sentiment.

This elaborate service of King Hezekiah's first year was, to be sure, a unique occasion; but it inaugurated a regular system of worship in which the king himself could emulate his great ancestor David and be to his people as David was. That he came to set great store by the Temple services with their musical accompaniments is indicated by his question when Isaiah promised him recovery from his sickness, "What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of Jehovah?" and by the Psalm he wrote (Isa. xxxviii, 10–20), which ends,

> Jehovah is ready to save me;
> Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments
> All the days of our life in the house of Jehovah.

He was of a pietistic and contemplative nature; devoted accordingly to the domestic upbuilding of his realm, and to sharing in the peaceful and religious pursuits of his common people, rather than to the diplomatic hazards and intrigues of his troubled time. One seems to get a reflection

of his mood in Psalm cxx, 5, 6, which I am disposed to date in his time:

> Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech,
> That I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
> My soul hath long had her dwelling
> With him that hateth peace.
> I am for peace:
> But when I speak, they are for war.

The Book of Psalms, as we have it complete before us, is the Hebrew anthem book. The songs contained in it were made for use in the Temple service; but whether exclusively for the second Temple, as critics maintain, or for public worship from the beginning, is at least a debatable question. Tradition maintains inveterately that David composed songs for public worship from the time that he brought the ark up from the house of Obed-Edom to the tent on Mount Zion and installed Asaph as the leader of his primitive orchestra ("Asaph with cymbals sounding loud," 1 Chron. xvi, 5). Concerning the development of psalmody, however, from Solomon to the exile, the history is silent; it is equally silent too concerning the development of worship and religious thought. Like our modern collections of hymns, the Psalms reflect the devotional needs of the congregation, for morning and evening worship, for spring and autumn festival occasions, and the like matters of regular recurrence; but besides this they reflect also certain great situations and events, such as dedications, the coronation or marriage of a king, as also times of national distress or peril, and times of deliverance from siege or captivity. Individual experience or meditation also plays a large, perhaps a leading, part therein, as some large personality expresses the deep emotions of his heart. Such songs, it is natural to believe, were continually being added to, from sources both within and without the Temple, and from composers both ancient and modern.

In this obscure history of Hebrew psalmody King Hezekiah may be confidently regarded as one of the greatest and most systematic collectors. To his age, as it seems to me, may be ascribed most of the notes of authorship, and the quaint musical titles, which latter are so ancient that their meaning is unintelligible to the Greek translators. It must be remembered, however, that the Psalms were not collected and preserved as literary curiosities, but for current use in the worship of a later day. They were subject therefore to continual revision and adaptation to new occasions; to a great extent also, as always in poetry, the new occasion would mold its wording and imagery in the more archaic terms of the earlier day, and so the old and the new would blend in one timeless utterance. This would be the case with the so-called Davidic Psalms, for instance; which, rising out of a time of war and uncertainty from enemies, succeeded by a time of settledness and peace, would with little change suit the similar conditions of Hezekiah's reign and the years of deliverance following.

With the collection of older Psalms would go also the composition of new ones. That such songs were written and not incorporated in the psalter we see from "the writing" of Hezekiah after his recovery from sickness (Isa. xxxviii, 10–20) and the prayer of Habakkuk (Hab. iii), which latter was provided like the collected Psalms with musical directions. The prophecies of Isaiah, also, contain a number of songs which in the manner of the Psalms serve as devotional sanctions of the prophetic vision (see Isa. xii, xxvi, xxxv). Within the psalter the rebound of spirit at the nation's release from Assyria and the impression of awe produced upon other nations by its miraculous character (cf. 2 Chron. xxxii, 23) seem to be reflected in the Psalms at the beginning of Book II of the collection (Psa. xlii–xlix) attributed to the "sons of Korah." Psalms cxxiv and cxxvi sound like reminiscences of that release.

Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
The snare is broken, and we are escaped (cxxiv, 7).

When Jehovah turned again the captivity of Zion,[1]
We were like unto them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
Jehovah hath done great things for them.
Jehovah hath done great things for us,
Whereof we are glad (cxxvi, 1–3).

These belong to a remarkable group of Psalms, fifteen in number (cxx–cxxxiv), called Songs of Degrees (A.V.) or Songs of Ascents (R.V.), lit., Songs of the Steps; which are thought by one scholar[2] to have been collected and so named in commemoration of the fifteen years added to King Hezekiah's life after his miraculous recovery from deadly illness; see the story, 2 Kings xx, 1–11; Isa. xxxviii; 2 Chron. xxxii, 24. The explanation is of course conjectural like all historical criticism; but at all events all of these Psalms seem to reflect in a striking manner various phases of the inner experience of the king and his realm during his last fifteen years.

Note. Within these years fell the deliverance from Assyria, as also some preceding perplexities (cf. Psa. cxx), the birth of the crown prince Manasseh (cf. 2 Kings xxi, 1), and perhaps the king's marriage (cf. Psa. cxlviii), which assured the continuance of the Davidic dynasty (cf. Psa. cxxvii, 3, 4). Nor should we overlook, in reading Psa. cxxxiii, the era of brotherly feeling sought in the early part of Hezekiah's reign by his Passover celebration (see 2 Chron. xxx, 25–27).

[1] For this line I prefer the simpler translation of the Authorized Version.

[2] J. W. Thirtle, "Old Testament Problems," chaps. i–v. It is only fair to say that this explanation of the Songs of Ascents is put by Professor G. B. Gray (Hastings' Bib. Dict., art. "Psalms") among "other ingenious but improbable suggestions" which he rejects in favor of a more traditional explanation. The present school of Psalm criticism (for example, Cheyne and Briggs) is strangely color blind to any history earlier than Artaxerxes Ochus.

The Compiling of Proverbs

Under the patronage of King Hezekiah also, as it appears, the fund of Wisdom, or mashal, literature was increased by a supplementary section of the Book of Proverbs (Prov. xxv–xxix) headed, "These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out." This heading in itself is significant for the light it throws on the date and make-up of the Book of Proverbs, and on the development of this strain of literature.

The Book of Proverbs, as this heading implies, is a compiled collection, made up of detached utterances of practical wisdom and sagacity, doubtless gathered from many sources and centers, and making no claim to original composition except such as is implied in the general attribution to Solomon. We have seen in an earlier chapter[1] in what sense the term "of Solomon" is to be taken; the mashals of this type are Solomonic in much the same sense as the Psalms are Davidic. In continuing to compile Solomonic proverbs two and a half centuries after Solomon, the men of Hezekiah were confessedly adding to a collection which had been accumulating since near the time when Solomon "spake three thousand proverbs" (1 Kings iv, 32). The original heading of this earlier section, "The Proverbs of Solomon," appears at chapter x, 1; other headings, implying other authors, are at xxii, 17, and xxiv, 23. Differences of style in the mashals of the original section (x, 1–xxii, 16) indicate a variety, perhaps a development, due to age and source. The Hezekian compilation, however, is more homogeneous, and in general more literary: similes and metaphors are far more numerous than elsewhere in the book, and there is a greater tendency to the riddling touch, more being left to the reader's thinking powers. This of course indicates, among the people at large, an advanced stage of literary appreciation.

[1] See above, Chapter II, pp. 85 ff. and 93.

The Wisdom literature, of which the Book of Proverbs is the most typical and representative product, is relatively speaking the secular portion of the Biblical literature. It has indeed a sincerely religious and orthodox tissue: it makes its Wisdom uncompromisingly synonymous with righteousness and in its view wickedness is sheer folly; but it deals with matters of the home and the field and the market and the gate, and its precepts are concerned not with abstract speculation but with practical conduct. To this end it relies not like the prophets on divine revelation but on human insight and sagacity; and this indeed is its real distinction. From earliest time the Hebrew lawgiver, worshiper, and prophet sought the mind of God; the Hebrew sage, in distinction from these, has learned to trust the mind of man, and to value its intuitions as authentic truth. His wisdom is felt as a native endowment, and not dependent on inspiration.

There are indications that in the time of Hezekiah and Isaiah the Solomonic mashal was the most popular form of literature, especially with the leading classes who prided themselves on their superior learning and culture. It had been brought, as the Hezekian proverbs show, to its highest pitch of grace and point and subtlety; its underlying thesis was still unquestioned. The human intuition (Heb. *thushiyyah*) seemed sufficient to all things; and the divine word as a realized source of truth was ignored. It was with this state of sentiment that Isaiah, who was urging the claim of faith and prophetic vision, came in sharpest collision. We read this in the notable twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. They had scorned his austere insistence as so much childish twaddle (vss. 9, 10), and after turning the tables on them in a wonderful climax of prophecy (vss. 11–22) he proceeded to compose a passage in their own popular idiom (vss. 23–29) to show that Jehovah also is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in intuition" (vs. 29). This, it seems

to me, is illuminative for the literary vogue of the period. Isaiah does not condemn the Wisdom utterance of his day; it is indeed, so far as it goes, a noble product; but he would not make it exclusive, and to its human sagacity, which is short-sighted and fallible, he would add the divine faith and vision which does not err.

To the collecting of psalms, the literature of piety and praise, and to the compiling of proverbs, the literature of didactic Wisdom, is rightly to be added in this awakened period a new and epoch-making strain, the literature of popularized law. This, however, is reserved to the next section, to be noted in connection with its effects.[1]

II. On the Eve of National Transplantation

We have called the remarkable escape of the Judean state from Assyrian captivity a postponement of doom;[2] this because in the natural course of things the nation's eventual absorption into the melting-pot of world-empire was only a question of time. But time was just now the essential element; for the evolution of the truest Jewish character it was like the period from infancy to lusty youth, the period of the nursery and the school. In the light of the century now intervening the providential motive of this postponement is clear. It was in Jehovah's purpose, as gradually disclosed by the prophets, that the nation should meet its ordeal of overthrow, when it came, not as a calamity but as a forward step and an opportunity, not as a race unmanned and disintegrated but organically matured and intact. To this end there was needed this century of fundamental education and upbuilding; there was needed also a seasoning of trial and patience. The healthful impulse to faith and loyalty awakened in the "remnant" in 701 must be so deepened and confirmed as to become the

[1] See The Book Found in the Temple, pp. 220 ff.
[2] See above, pp. 157 ff.

vital and redeeming spiritual force in the nation's supreme mission; while at the same time the false and corrupting elements, hitherto so dominant, must be unmasked and discredited. Such was the inner situation of things in the kingdom of Judah as it approached its momentous epoch of national transplantation.

Kings of Judah after Hezekiah

Of the kings who from Hezekiah to the Chaldean exile had substantial influence on the mind and fortunes of Judah, only two need here be mentioned: Manasseh and Josiah, — a third being reserved for another connection. Manasseh, the son and successor of Hezekiah, beginning as a boy of twelve and reigning fifty-five years, seemed fanatically determined to restore all the exotic "customs from the east" which in the time of his grandfather Ahaz were becoming so rife in Israel, and to overthrow all the simpler and plainer forms which his father Hezekiah had endeavored to establish and which the prophets Micah and Isaiah had inculcated. It looked like a hopeless return to the sloughs of heathenism, and doubtless its fashionable prevalence captivated the shallow minds of the wealthier classes; but its quiet reactive effect, especially among the land's people, was to make the more spiritual faith strike in and become more deeply rooted. We can justly infer this from the fact that Manasseh resorted to persecution of the prophets, his fanaticism even extending to bloodshed; for persecution, the child of fear, connotes something substantial to persecute. The sterling mind of the people was evidently becoming formed and enlightened; Isaiah's impassioned eloquence had not been in vain. Meanwhile the land was still under tribute to Assyria; and the Chronicler records (2 Chron. xxxiii, 10–13) that Manasseh, taken in chains to Babylon, humbled himself before Jehovah, was restored to Jerusalem, and "knew that Jehovah he was God" (2 Chron. xxxiii, 18). The prayer that he offered in his

penitence, or at least one purporting to be his, is given in the Apocrypha. He apparently did nothing, however, to break up the chaos of religious syncretism that he had done so much to promote; he became, perhaps, a kind of religious connoisseur, ready to welcome whole pantheons of deities and to experiment with whole systems of divination and necromancy (cf. 2 Kings xxi, 3–6; 2 Chron. xxxiii, 3–6). In his reign the fascinating influence of the world-prevailing idolatrous cults seems to have reached its height; amounting, in the king's case, to a fanatical obsession not unlike the modern craze for exotic religions, only more sincere.

But his reign marked also, as some signs indicate, the turn of the tide. The long and inveterate hankering for the crude idolatries of the nations, which had occasioned Israel's hardest spiritual fight, was weakening. To the matter-of-fact Jewish mind, which could be brought to discard the nation's most venerated symbol as "a piece of brass" (cf. 2 Kings xviii, 4), the elaborate inanities of heathenism of which Jerusalem was full were becoming a surfeit and a drug. To be sure, time was needed and ripening good sense to cast their idols "to the moles and to the bats" (cf. Isa. ii, 20), for they were idols of silver and gold, and vested interests were bound up with them; but in the reign of Josiah, who after Amon's two years' reign was brought to the throne by the people of the land (2 Kings xxi, 24), the whole tone and atmosphere of the realm seems to have undergone a wholesome change. There was a growing disposition to "ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way" (cf. Jer. vi, 16). Josiah was only eight years old when he began to reign; but his early training fell into the careful hands of priests and seers; and the fact that he owed his throne not to court management but to the people of the land seems to indicate that the more sterling and sincere element dominated

during his years of nonage. The saner mind of Israel was escaping from foreign influences and coming to itself. Accordingly, in the eighteenth year of his reign, while he was still a young man, Josiah was moved to repair the Temple and in place of the showy and luxurious idolatries reinstate the simpler time-honored worship. Of the book found in the Temple, and its momentous effect on the people's subsequent life, the next section is the place to speak.[1] Of the man himself, his personality imbued with piety and faith, we may say it made his reign one of the great landmarks in Israel's history, causing him to be reckoned as one of the three blameless kings of Judah.[2] It is to be noted, however, that faith and piety, though ever so blameless, cannot safely ignore wisdom and sound judgment. This was the simple but costly lesson that the Jewish people, in this stage of their new-born trust in Jehovah, had to learn. In an ill-advised expedition against Pharaoh-necoh, as the latter was on his way through northern Palestine in a campaign against Assyria, he was slain at Megiddo (2 Kings xxiii, 29, 30); an event which, though causing an unspeakable shock of sorrow, was of deep service in divorcing the people's faith from superstition, and thus an important element in the progress of "Jehovah's work, his strange work."

With this sketch of the times in mind, we have now to consider the literary products of the century intervening between the death of Isaiah and the Chaldean exile. We will begin with the prophetic strain broached by the northern prophets and carried on by Micah and Isaiah, the strain of avowed preparation for the destiny to come.

[1] "The Book Found in the Temple," pp. 220 ff.

[2] "Except David and Hezekiah and Josiah, all committed trespass: for they forsook the law of the Most High; the kings of Judah failed" (Ecclus. xlix, 4, with which cf. 2 Kings xxiii, 25).

I

Prophets of the Dies Iræ. "Dies iræ, dies illa" is the Vulgate rendering of a clause in Zephaniah (Zeph. i, 15) — a clause made memorable in literature and music as the first line of a celebrated medieval hymn by Thomas of Celano.[1] It expresses in briefest compass what we may call the watchword of the prophetic order, putting into one severe assertion the apocalyptic presage which from the beginning loomed with greater or less vividness before the literary prophets. A blunt watchword of this kind was needed. The inveterate tendency of the Hebrew race was to presume on their distinction as the covenant people of Jehovah, and to define, or rather to assume their destiny in terms of conquest, prosperity, immunity — a careless confidence which eclipsed their true mission in the earth and ministered only to worldliness and moral indifference. It must accordingly be the business of the prophets from the beginning to disabuse the people's mind of this self-pleasing notion. We see this in one of the earliest of the prophetic warnings, given by Amos when the northern kingdom was at the height of its prosperity. "Woe unto you," he says, "that desire the day of Jehovah! Wherefore would ye have the day of Jehovah? It is darkness, and not light" (Amos v, 18). Joel also in Judah, drawing from the portent of the locust plague, exclaims, "Alas for the day! for the day of Jehovah is at hand, and as destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel i, 15); a warning which is repeated in Isaiah's oracle against Babylon (Isa. xiii, 6). It is natural, perhaps, that the first vision of that day should lie within the horizon of Israel's fortunes; as Jeremiah expresses it, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's

[1] "Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæclum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla."

trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. xxx, 7). But as the day draws near the vision enlarges; its apocalyptic character emerges more to light, until these three traits of it stand out: first, the day of Jehovah is not bounded by the captivity, but only begins with that; second, it is not confined to Israel but is due upon all the nations; and third, its wrath and destructive character are only the prelude to an era of construction and righteousness and peace. And with this consummation assured the prophetic vision fades.

Of all the prophets who have dealt with the coming day of Jehovah, Isaiah is incomparably the most lucid and discriminating; it is this quality that makes his prophecy so truly a vision. With his keen spiritual sympathy he detects under the defects of humanity its germinal redeeming traits, and under the just wrath of Jehovah his healing mercy (cf. Isa. xix, 22). The others, sensitive to the wickedness that precipitates the doom, see little ahead but undifferentiated wrath. They are like a kind of echo or aftermath of what the greater prophets have broached; giving their messages at various times during the century succeeding the reprieve, as the day of Jehovah, becoming more imminent, casts its shadow before.

Without attempting to fix exact times or specific occasions, let us endeavor briefly to characterize the prophets who from Isaiah to Jeremiah contributed to the literature.

Zephaniah: Encountering Religious Atrophy

With a figure that reminds one of Diogenes, but in a very different mood, Zephaniah, a lineal descendant of Hezekiah, asserts Jehovah's purpose to unearth a deadly blight which has invaded the spiritual life of Jerusalem, perhaps as a reactive result of the uncertain strife of cults and creeds that must have confused the fanatical reign of Manasseh and the obstinate heathenism of Amon. His prophecy dates

from "the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah" (i, 1), when the king, the priests, and the prophets were struggling to make a purer religious truth prevail. But there was a formidable element which only the terrors of a *dies iræ* could move, and it is against this class of the people that the prophet brings his indictment. "And it shall come to pass at that time," is Jehovah's word, "that I will search Jerusalem with lamps; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil" (i, 12). Men to whom their God has no moral meaning; such were more abhorrent to sound sense in Zephaniah's day than in ours. From the general attitude of his prophecy we know whom he has in mind: men of the leading and fashionable classes, "the princes, and the king's sons, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel" (i, 8); whose pride of wealth or station or exotic culture has atrophied their religious sense. For such men, "settled on their lees" in a religion that means nothing, a day of wrath, portentous with glooms and alarms, is impending. He describes the day, as do other prophets, in lurid terms of sight and sense; such belong to his apocalyptic idiom; but the fact that he is seeking thereby to rouse a dead conscience shows that the calamity he sees has more than a military or political meaning.

More also than a meaning for Jerusalem and Judea alone. The day will overtake the surrounding nations as well, Philistia and Moab and Ammon and Ethiopia, and at the head of them Assyria with its splendid capital Nineveh, "the joyous city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me" (ii, 15). It is a cosmopolitan mess; and with the pervading unmoral sentiment born of pride and luxury these men on their lees are involved. And the terror of the day for them all will be the evident sovereignty of the God whom

their contempt and reproaches, directed against his people, have outraged. "Jehovah will be terrible unto them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the nations" (ii, 11). To "famish all the gods of the earth," such is His purpose as disclosed to the growing insight of the prophets; and Zephaniah publishes this purpose just when, after a long infatuation with exotic cults and customs, they have well-nigh starved the knowledge and worship of Jehovah. The men of mark in the nation have earned a day of darkness and not light.

In dealing with this class Zephaniah maintains with steadfast clearness, as offset to their negativism, the same prophetic strain in which Isaiah and Micah launched their prophecies a century before. His plea, like theirs, is for a plain and vital religion, and for the wholesome spirit of the remnant. "Gather yourselves together," he says, "yea, gather together, O nation that hath no longing;[1] before the decree bring forth (the day passeth as the chaff), before the fierce anger of Jehovah come upon you, before the day of Jehovah's anger come upon you. Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be that ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger" (ii, 1–3). That is the nation's simple but sufficing safeguard against the peril to come. And that spirit will be embodied in a class which is already making itself felt as a leavening and integrating power in the nation. "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall take refuge in the name of Jehovah. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (iii, 12, 13). With this promise made, the

[1] So read, according to ii, 1, margin.

prophecy which began with stern predictions of woe ends with a song (iii, 14–20), in which the large destiny of Israel, to be "a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth" (iii, 20), obliterates the day of wrath.

Nahum: **Describing the Doom of Nineveh**

"Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! Keep thy feasts, O Judah, perform thy vows; for the wicked one shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off" (Nah. i, 15; cf. Isa. lii, 7). One can imagine with what intensity of relief the prophet Nahum could make this announcement to his people, when he became aware that the great city Nineveh, so long the hard tyrant of the world, was doomed. To the large prophetic sense this event marked the actual dawn of the momentous day of Jehovah, big with fate for the nations; and the vision of it — for this book, it will be noted, is "the *vision* of Nahum the Elkoshite" — recalled from the past the correlative vision of Isaiah. A century before, when the Assyrian hordes first overran the Holy Land, subjugating the kingdom of Israel and all but overwhelming Judah, Isaiah had with keen presage mapped out, as it were, the ultimate meaning of it all (see Isa. x, 5–27). The Assyrian, he maintained, was just "the rod of Jehovah's anger," who, while seeking but his own brutal and predatory ends, was unwittingly working out the severe but salutary design of Jehovah by bringing a needed chastisement and discipline upon the two houses of Israel; and whose yoke, when his oppressive work was done, would be lifted from Israel's neck (Isa. x, 27). And now, to the spiritual insight of Nahum, the hour of deliverance had struck. "Though I have afflicted thee," he assures his people, "I will afflict thee no more. And now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder" (i, 12, 13).

What was the real nature of the yoke so soon to be lifted appears from Jehovah's word, "Out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image" (i, 14), and from the prophet's exhortation appended to his good tidings, "Keep thy feasts, O Judah, perform thy vows" (i, 15), — in other words, be free to resume the native and congenial religious customs. The yoke of exotic cults had long been a veritable burden upon them. Under Ahaz the infection had been incurred with the Assyrian protective alliance; Hezekiah had enlisted only a small and humble remnant against it; and under Manasseh and Amon it had become inveterate. We have seen in the prophecy of Zephaniah how the burden became a blight, — a medley of gods and grotesque rites (cf. Zeph. i, 4–6, 9), and a sad atrophy of care and conscience. Truly a grievous yoke, with which civil or financial tyranny cannot compare. And now on the source of all this, the capital and stronghold of idolatrous religion and culture, the day of Jehovah's wrath has dawned. The vision of Nahum is the oracle concerning Nineveh.

It has been remarked that Nahum, unlike other prophets, brings no word of indictment against his people. His theme gives him no occasion to do so. He has enough to do in describing the downfall of the first and most brutal of world-empires; an event which for its far-reaching consequences to humanity would merit a literature of exposition. Nahum's treatment of it, however, is not expository; does not deal didactically with the moral or motive of the thing. Enough for him that it is of Jehovah, and that under it we read the consistent character of a God revealed to Israel from ancient time and now verified in concrete event, — a God who is slow to anger and will not clear the guilty (i, 3; cf. Ex. xxxiv, 6, 7). For the rest, his method is descriptive, we may almost say pictorial; I have accordingly called it describing the doom of Nineveh,

viewing it beforehand in vision as if it were before his eyes. He handles his subject with the assured touch of a master. The various stages of siege and defense, of the turmoil of battle, and of the horror and desolation succeeding, are portrayed with a vividness and vigor unmatched elsewhere in scripture. Two thirds of the book, the second and third chapters, are taken up with this description. The book is tense and austere; we have quoted from the first chapter nearly all that relieves the general severity of style with words of comfort or amenity. In the traces of acrostic structure in the original of the first ten verses, there are signs that this portion of the prophecy was meant for a kind of introductory hymn or ode: a purpose not unfitting to its elevated sentiment and style, and to the important portrayal of which it is the prelude.

NOTE. The fall of Nineveh, which Nahum's vision foresees by a few years, and the consequent transfer of world-empire from Assyria to Chaldea and Babylon, occurred in 607 B. C. Ten years later (597) came the surrender of King Jehoiachin to Nebuchadnezzar, which event virtually began the Chaldean captivity and exile; and eleven years thereafter (586) the capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple completed the downfall of the Jewish state. Thus the events of the day of Jehovah once begun came crowding close upon each other; and the prophets who had a genuine message from Jehovah were engaged, so to say, in gathering such predictive and interpretative elements as would, in the confusion of events, make Jehovah's will and purpose clear.

Obadiah: **Pronouncing the Doom of Edom**

At a time whose date cannot be definitely determined, but in which he could say, "The day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations" (Obad. 15), the prophet Obadiah, in the shortest book of the Old Testament, directs a whole "vision" against Edom, the neighbor nation of Israel, nucleating his oracle in the curt prediction: "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head." The contemplation of what Edom had done,

and of the attitude which that proud nation had always maintained toward Israel, roused bitter indignation in all the prophets. From the earliest of them, years before the downfall of the northern kingdom, to the latest, years after the deportation of Judah, the charge against Edom was uniformly the same. We may regard Obadiah, part of whose prophecy is paralleled by Jeremiah (cf. vss. 1–6 with Jer. xlix, 14–16, 9, 10), as a kind of attorney for the whole prophetic case. Like his colleagues he motives the impending wrath upon Edom as "for the violence done to thy brother Jacob" (10). In other words, his vision concentrates the thrust of the general prophetic mind not against any specific outrage nor indeed against Edom alone but against that perversion of natural affection which manifests itself in the ruthless, the inhumane, the unbrotherly, — a disposition of which throughout their common history Edom had been the conspicuous type.

NOTE. *The Prophets against Edom.* The following list of prophecies against Edom are arranged as far as possible chronologically; the place of Obadiah, however, being uncertain: (1) Joel iii, 19; (2) Amos i, 11, 12; (3) Isa. xxxiv, 5–7; (4) Obadiah; (5) Jer. xlix, 7–22; (6) Lam. iv, 21, 22 (ironical); (7) Psa. cxxxvii, 7; (8) Ezek. xxv, 12–14; (9) Ezek. xxxv (Mount Seir-Edom); (10) Isa. lxiii, 1–6; (11) Mal. i, 2–5.

The prophecies in Isaiah (First and Second) answer more vividly to the vision character than do the others, and seem to be correlative to each other. In the First (Isa. xxxiv, 5–15) Jehovah describes the "sacrifice" that he has in Bozrah (a chief city of Edom), and the desolation that will ensue; in the Second (Isa. lxiii, 1–6), after the sacrifice is supposedly over, He is beheld coming up from Edom, "with dyed garments from Bozrah," — one of the sublimest descriptions in all prophetic literature.

Though Obadiah, as has been suggested, is the spokesman of the Edom case, he is by no means a mere echo or summarizer of the other prophets. In the counsel he gives to Edom (vss. 10–14) he analyzes in a masterly way

what it is to be unbrotherly — standing aloof, rejoicing in a brother's disaster, plundering a brother's substance, cutting off a brother's escape. Such are spiritual qualities utterly in contrast to what should be expected in descendants of a twin ancestor; and the "shame that shall cover" them (10) will be due to the fact that they will succumb to a superior and surviving spiritual force in the people that now they wrong (18). Nor is this all, though it is the root of the matter. Edom, among the Semitic nations, was distinguished for wisdom. The inhabitants of Teman, its main city and district, were renowned for it (cf. Jer. xlix, 7); Eliphaz, represented as the wisest and most venerable of Job's friends, was "Eliphaz the Temanite." Well, Obadiah says the wisdom of Edom is destined to fail (8). The secret alliances and diplomacies by which that nation has maintained its ascendancy shall be uncovered and turned against it (5–9). So shall Edom, now so self-confident, become "small among the nations" (2; cf. Jer. xlix, 15), its worldly wisdom futile and discredited.

All this prophecy of doom, however, is made in no vindictive or revengeful spirit; it is a vision, not a decree. Like the other prophets, too, Obadiah is constructive; he does not fail to end his message with a compensating note of redemption and hope. "And saviours," he concludes, "shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be Jehovah's" (21). Thus his prophecy, true to its strain of literature, opens out to wider horizons, and to an eventual blessing, even upon the most inveterate adversary of Israel, beyond the self-induced doom.

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will look forth to see what he will speak with me, and what I shall answer concerning my complaint. And Jehovah answered me, and said, 'Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that

readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay'" (Hab. ii, 1–3). Such was the resolve of the prophet Habakkuk, and its reassuring answer, when, about the year 600 B.C., he contemplated the dim and troublous times just preceding the break-up of the Jewish state. His prophecy is headed, "The burden (or oracle) which Habakkuk the prophet did see" (i, 1); hardly to be called vision as yet,[1] like those of Nahum and Obadiah, being an object for the meaning of which he must wait, something which he saw but did not understand. His oracle, accordingly, unlike the typical prophetic word, begins with a passion of personal bewilderment and doubt (i, 2–4); which mood, however, answered dialoguewise[2] by Jehovah, gradually subsides to the calmer resolve quoted above (ii, 1) and, consenting thus to wait and consider, comes out to that utterance of living faith (ii, 4) which is the grand keynote of the book.[3] From this point onward doubt disappears. It is as if the vision emerged from dimness to clarity before the prophet's eyes, and were the product alike of human intuition and divine disclosure.

Habakkuk: Bewildered yet Faithfully Waiting

The prophet had reason for his doubt. It was the day of power and ascendancy for the man "whose might is his god" (i, 11; cf. 16). Assuming that Habakkuk's prophecy dates from 600 B.C., we may note that Nineveh, hitherto the center of world-empire, had fallen in 607 B.C., leaving Chaldea independent and aggressive, and that in

[1] For the relation of burden and vision see above, p. 191, note 1.

[2] Professor Moulton, in the "Modern Reader's Bible," shows lucidly the dialogue character of the book, as also its lyric elements.

[3] This conclusion of Habakkuk's, "The righteous shall live by his faith" (or more accurately, "in his faithfulness"), has had untold influence in shaping the religious ideas of mankind; see the use of it in the New Testament, Rom. i, 17; Gal. iii, 11; Heb. x, 38.

605 B.C. Egypt, hitherto the formidable rival of Assyria and Chaldea, had been defeated at Carchemish on the upper Euphrates by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. "This victory of Nebuchadnezzar," says Professor Driver,[1] "was the turning point in the history of the age. It meant that the Chaldeans were destined to acquire supremacy over the whole of Western Asia." Of this the prophet is doubtless aware; he can assent to the word of Jehovah, too, that the Chaldeans, "that bitter and hasty nation" (i, 6), are ordained for judgment and correction (i, 12). But what puzzles him is that Jehovah should countenance at all, much less use for his holy purpose, such an instrumentality against his own people, — should hold his peace "when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he" (i, 13), and then stupidly worships the net and the drag by which he has taken the nations and their wealth (i, 16). It is the same baffling question of the relation of might to right of which we have seen an amazing recrudescence in our own time. And the prophet, waiting for the vision that shall not lie, is guided to two answers, which we may call the divine disclosure and the human discovery: first, that this strange choice of instrumentality belongs to the incredible work in which Jehovah is engaged (i, 5; cf. Isa. xxviii, 21), a work in which the destiny of all nations is involved; and secondly, that this ravaging nation is really insane, — it is drunk with the lust of world conquest and stupid with materialism. "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not straight[2] in him"; and so the prophet can set over this condition a might which is surely higher in the spiritual scale and therefore destined to survive: "but the righteous shall live by his faith" (ii, 4). Such was the intrepid spirit with which prophecy had learned to wait for the impending day of Jehovah.

[1] The New Century Bible, Minor Prophets, Vol. II, p. 52.
[2] So read, with the margin, instead of "upright."

Having employed thus far the prophetic idiom, the word of Jehovah, the prophet now has recourse to the *mashal* or parable idiom, the language of human wisdom, to hurl back upon the encroaching Chaldeans their atrocities of character. "Shall not all these (namely, the ravaged and plundered nations) take up a *mashal* against him, and a satire, riddles, against him" (ii, 6)? There follows a series of five woes, inveighing against the various phases of Chaldean aggression, each woe couched in a lyrical couplet followed by a passage of detail (ii, 6; 9; 12; 15; 19), and ending with what I have called the stupidity of materialism, — which is the modern idolatry. Thus the prophet scores not only the Chaldean ambition but the Chaldean culture.

Finally, in the third chapter, the prophet who has spoken in the language of oracle and of wisdom becomes a psalmist, and ends his book with a prayer, set like Psa. vii to Shigionoth (a musical term whose meaning is only conjectural) and dedicated like many of the Psalms to the music-master of the orchestra. The prayer is expressed in the old-fashioned form of the theophany (cf. Deut. xxxiii, 2; Judg. v, 4, 5), in which Jehovah's wrath against the nations and his activity for the salvation of his anointed (iii, 12, 13) is portrayed in terms of violent natural phenomena. In the realization of this divine care, though in trembling, —

> Because I must wait quietly for the day of trouble,
> For the coming up of the people that invadeth us (iii, 16),

yet it is not as if he were dreading a *dies irae*; the abiding mood in which his song culminates is hope and joy, the life of his faithfulness:

> Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
> I will joy in the God of my salvation;
> Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength;
> And he maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
> And will make me to walk upon my high places (iii, 18, 19).

II

The Book Found in the Temple. Our consideration of the prophetic strain of literature has brought us within the shadow of the coming exile, leaving only Jeremiah to be considered before that event puts the period to what we have chosen to call the formative centuries of the literature. Before we take up his prophetic work, however, let us return to what was spoken of in a previous section,[1] namely, the consideration of "a new and epoch-making strain of literature" to be added to the forms already in their ripened development. This takes us back from Habakkuk's time to a date twenty-five years before the Chaldean invasion, the eighteenth year of the good King Josiah's reign; a date noted with care by the Scripture historians, doubtless from their sense of its significance in the cultural and spiritual history of Israel.

The event that made this year noteworthy was, to begin with, an event mainly literary: the finding and reading of a book. The story of the discovery and its effect is told, with some variations of incident and detail, in 2 Kings xxii, xxiii, and 2 Chronicles xxxiv, xxxv. As workmen were engaged in repairing the Temple, which during previous reigns had suffered profanations and indignities (cf. 2 Kings xxi, 4–8), the priest Hilkiah found a book that had so long remained hidden or neglected that none could trace its origin; which book he identified as "the book of the law." He showed it to Shaphan the scribe, who in turn brought it to the king. On reading in it enough to get its purport and be greatly troubled thereby, he had the book submitted to Huldah the prophetess, who confirmed its words of warning and censure, thus giving it, as it were, the prophetic imprimatur, and added a reassuring prediction personal to the king himself.

The Discovery and its Sequel

[1] See above, p. 204.

The king thereupon called an assembly in the Temple, "the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great," and read to them "the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Jehovah" (2 Kings xxiii, 2). The immediate sequel of the reading was a solemn ratification of the requirements of the book, confirmed by a personal covenant with Jehovah on the part of the king. "And," it is added, "all the people stood to the covenant." It is the first recorded instance under the kingdom of a general popular response to a literary or prophetic message. Then followed a strenuous and unsparing crusade against the idolatrous high places of which the land was full, the heathen rites and customs that had accumulated since Ahaz, and the occult sorceries and superstitions which everywhere had so alloyed the people's faith. This done, a Passover season was observed in the central sanctuary, Jerusalem, — a festival season such as had not been known since the time of the Judges.

Such, in its external manifestations, was the momentous reform under King Josiah, a revolution which had been silently gathering head among the sterling and intelligent common people since Isaiah and Hezekiah had labored to move a feeble "remnant," touched with a spiritual pulsation, into resolute loyalty and faith.[1] Hezekiah's reform, as we have seen, was only an initial step; and a century of spiritual growth and discipline, not without persecution, must intervene before the nation could move to shake off the incubus of idolatry and heathen obscurantism.[2] But now the day of the new movement had dawned. The remnant was emerging from its obscurity and so leavening public opinion and sentiment that the king could reckon and rely on its reactive support as his predecessor Hezekiah could not. And the instrumentality by which the reform was precipitated was the book found in the Temple.

[1] See above, p. 172. [2] See above, p. 204.

From the nature of the response it elicited and of the reformation that ensued, it is clear that this unnamed book discovered in 622 B.C. was substantially, if not in final form, the Book of Deuteronomy; and that it derived its tremendous influence and authority from the implicit belief that it was the original "book of the law" (2 Kings xxii, 8), the essential covenant (xxiii, 2) and constitution of the Israelite faith. No doubt seems to have arisen regarding its authenticity, although nearly seven centuries had elapsed since it was supposedly written. It purported to contain the actual words of the nation's traditional founder and lawgiver Moses, and beyond these by only one remove the awesome words of Jehovah whose being had become so remote. As such utterance it brought Jehovah's mind and purpose near as even the words of the prophets had not availed to do. It was doubtless the vigorous sentences of warning and curse found near the end of the book (xxvii, 15–26; xxviii) which had the first and sharpest effect in causing the king's dismay (2 Kings xxii, 11) and waking to life the torpid conscience of the people. But the permanent and steadying effect, beyond that of any other Old Testament book, was due to something far deeper, on which oldness or newness had no determining power. In other words, the book was intuitively recognized as not merely the law of Moses but the law of sane and wholesome living for a people whose God is Jehovah; and as such it was self-evidencing.

Identified as the Book of Deuteronomy

NOTE. *The Name "Deuteronomy."* The book owes its name—which we do not get from its author—to the mistranslation of a word in xvii, 18, when the book was translated from Hebrew into Greek. The king, as it there says, "shall write him a copy (*mishneh*) of this law in a book." For this phrase the Septuagint version has *to deuteronomion touto*, "this second law," or "repeated law." The name, however, is a happy accident. "Although based upon a grammatical error," says Professor Driver, "the name is not an inappropriate one; for Deuteronomy (see xxix, 1) does embody the terms of a second legislative

'covenant,' and includes (by the side of much fresh matter) a repetition of a large part of the laws contained in what is sometimes called the 'First Legislation' of Exodus (Exod. xx, 22–xxiii, 33)."[1]

Modern criticism has not treated the book as did the people of King Josiah's time. A disturbing problem, indeed, has arisen regarding the real authorship of our Book of Deuteronomy and the time of its composition, — a problem which to some scholars has seemed to involve the good faith of the book. Is it the actual work of Moses, which lay for incredible centuries undiscovered, or is it a pious fraud, the work of a much later author, who cunningly hid it where it was found, in order that in due time it might come to light? The gravity of the problem has, I think, been overrated. We cannot, indeed, ascribe the book as it stands either to the pen or to the time of Moses; but neither can we deny to him its essential substance and spirit. How this is we can see by considering how it answers to the ancient matter with which it deals and to the more developed civilization and culture which the discovery of it encountered.

How the Book Reflects the Mind of Moses

As measured by the marvelous effect it produced, the Book of Deuteronomy is a notable example of the transmuting power and charm of literature. Its basal material, as old as Moses and the wilderness days, had lain inert in the professional keeping of priests and magistrates, or in the musty archives of the Temple. We can see what the earlier form and phraseology of law was in such chapters as Exodus xxi–xxiii. It was austere, remote, impersonal; it was treated, too, according to the primitive conception of written matter, as a thing to be stored and kept rather than as a thing to be made interesting and promulgated.[2] In this Book of Deuteronomy, however, one feels at once the charm of a transmuting spirit.

[1] Driver, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy," p. i.

[2] See remarks on this distinction, pp. 14, 15, above.

Here is a work to which has been imparted the magical touch of literature. The hoary material assumes new form and life; it is law, indeed, but law popularized by being put in the language of personal love and personal counsel. It is a lawgiver's precepts given not as arbitrary commands but as principles vitalized by sane motive, reasonableness, graciousness, humanity, and as molded to the terms of spiritual cause and effect. The aged Moses is represented as gathering his people together, just upon the eve of their entrance into their promised land, a land which he is forbidden to enter with them, and giving them in several discourses his last words, in which he rehearses the principles that for forty years he has labored to teach them. It is in itself an impressive setting. All the elements of situation, character, and the primitive wilderness coloring are preserved with wonderful literary skill. Whoever gave the book its later form had by an intimate historic imagination so lived himself into ancient conditions that in reading him one is transported to the wilderness times with no sense of anachronism or discrepancy. It is not because the book obtrudes a false or doubtful claim that its time and authorship are questioned. The book, we may confidently say, is genuinely and authentically Mosaic. Its warp is of Moses, both in substance and in pervading spirit. But with this is interwoven, by the magic of literary skill, a woof of benignant grace and poise whose legitimate appeal is to a more developed social and political state than we can attribute to the crude conditions of its assumed origin. All this is due to the personal element graciously interfused. In hearing its words we listen not to a hard decree or statute but to the living voice of a man. By its persuasive charm the Hebrew law, from being a thing austere, arbitrary, remote, as ages of deposit in guilds and archives would make it, becomes a companionable element of common life, an accessible friend in counsel. In a word, it is law charged with personality.

How the Book fits the Time of King Josiah

Beyond this personal element, however, there was an underlying strain in the Book of Deuteronomy which wrought to precipitate and crystallize spiritual convictions that had long been in solution in the deeper mind of Israel. Under their recreant kings — Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon — and under the inveterate tendency to ape foreign fashions, the leaders of sentiment had been groping or drifting in a maze of exotic cults and customs, until their sense of the godlike issues of life, or care for them, was sadly confused and blunted. Zephaniah felt their plight rightly, — they were "settled on their lees," in a kind of negative limbo between good and evil (cf. Zeph. i, 12).[1] This timely book cleared the air. It brought men back from the fads and superficialities of life to the simple sanity of first principles. It restored the inherent healthfulness of the native Hebrew mind. It renewed and enhanced the personal sense of relation with God, which was tending to lapse, and therewith the kindly sense of fellowship with neighbor man. An integrating influence, we may call it, to bring Jehovah's chosen people to a definition of terms.

No detailed analysis is needed to show how intimately the book fitted the time of its discovery. The basal appeal of it is to Israel's self-respect and dignity as a nation chosen of Jehovah to a high mission. Yet that self-respect must needs be tempered and motived, — as Kipling would say, "lest we forget." The people of Israel have indeed abundant reason to deem themselves unique among the peoples of the earth; but it lies not in their superior numbers, for they were few (vii, 7), nor in their surpassing

[1] That a nation's mind may become rancid and torpid, and need the disturbing power of a new dynamic, even though this may be violent and revolutionary, is shown in a lucid way by Jeremiah (xlviii, 11, 12), who explains, in the case of the people of Moab, what is meant by being "settled on their lees."

righteousness, for they were stiff-necked (ix, 5, 6). It lay in their peculiarly intimate relation to the unseen, as a nation whom Jehovah loved and delivered, and to whom He gave in audible voice (v, 22) the law of the Ten Words (v, 6–21; cf. Exod. xx, 2–17), and through Moses a body of more specific enactments. "Behold," the lawgiver says, "I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as Jehovah my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go in to possess it. Keep therefore and do them: for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (iv, 5–8).

Such is the groundwork of appeal; but it is not merely pride in their law, a law so long in abeyance, that the author of Deuteronomy has at heart. It goes back of this to the God who gave it, and to the personal and spiritual response which His dealings with them have earned. "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah; and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (vi, 4, 5). Such a sense of God opens the windows to a spiritual feeling and atmosphere in which the crass idolatries and superstitions of the less developed races and nations cannot subsist. The conception of a Deity unseen and not to be likened to any created thing (iv, 15–24), yet who has revealed Himself by voice and by law, gives rise to the most peremptory mandates of the legislation. Accordingly, the command is to burn the images of other national gods (vii, 25, 26); to destroy the high places with all their trumpery of corrupt worship

and conduct (xii, 2–4); and, as essential to the purity of the religion of Jehovah, to concentrate the public worship, festival, and sacrifice at what in the Mosaic dialect is "the place which Jehovah your God shall choose," but which in Josiah's time could only mean the Temple at Jerusalem (xii, 5–11). But this finer sense of Jehovah's being has a profound effect also on the sense of the proper approach to Him and the proper apprehension of His will and purpose. It makes the whole business of magic and sorcery and divination an aversion (xviii, 10–14), and removes prophecy from the realm of dreams and trance to the basis of sound sense such as Moses himself had (xviii, 15–22; cf. xiii, 1–5). In short, the Book of Deuteronomy is a plea for the simple religion of love to a God who is near and personal (cf. x, 12, 13), and for a wholesome law of life which justifies itself in common sense (xxx, 11–14). We can think what a power such a message would have in a nation so long confused with foreign cults and customs, and how accurately timed it would be to their inner need, so like what Amos had foretold of the northern kingdom (cf. Amos viii, 11). And no better preparation and prophylactic could have been devised for the ordeal of transplantation and exile which was so soon to come upon the nation. It wrought to make the true Israel ready when the crisis came. So this Book of Deuteronomy may be truly regarded as one of the most potent and far-reaching books of all time.

It is worthy of note that our Lord Jesus, in his day, made very appreciative use of it. From it he deduced the first great commandment (Mark xii, 29; cf. Deut. vi, 4); and for all his answers to the temptations of the wilderness (Matt. iv, 1–11) he drew from its store of precepts (vs. 4, cf. Deut. viii, 3; vs. 7, cf. Deut. vi, 16; vs. 10, cf. Deut. vi. 13), as if testifying thus to its sufficiency for the deepest spiritual needs. St. Paul also makes a free but just adaptation

of one of its eloquent passages (xxx, 12–14) to elucidate one of the most distinctive Christian concepts, "the righteousness which is of faith" (see Rom. x, 6–8).

The book in its present finished form seems likeliest to have been a product of the age of Isaiah and Hezekiah, when, as we have seen, literary and prophetic activity alike awoke to inwardness and vigor.[1] When Isaiah had his school of disciples to perpetuate prophetic values (Isa. viii, 16; xxx, 8), and Hezekiah his scholars to compile the treasures of Wisdom (Prov. xxv, 1), the venerable laws of Moses, so long stowed away in Temple archives, would not escape the attention of the men of letters who had the constitutional welfare of Israel at heart. On account of the religious confusion of the times succeeding Hezekiah's reign, as it would seem, the publication of the book had to wait. There is no indication, however, that either the composition or the discovery was lacking in good faith; and from the first its claim to be the veritable words of Moses was received as authentic. If a more modern element was recognized as interwoven in it, men would take this simply as due to the endeavor to "copy fair what time had blurred."

III

Jeremiah: the Man and the Crisis. In the thirteenth year of King Josiah's reign, five years before the Deuteronomic code was brought to light, and when according to the Chronicler the religious purgation of Judah and Jerusalem was well under way (2 Chron. xxxiv, 3), Jeremiah, a young man of priestly family dwelling in Anathoth near Jerusalem, received from Jehovah his call to be a prophet to Israel. The call seems to have been merely auditory (i, 4–10), and not accompanied, as were Isaiah's and Ezekiel's (cf. Isa. vi, 1–13; Ezek. i, 4–ii, 7), by a visual appearance. Nor was he, like them, a man of spacious and

[1] See Westphal and Du Pontet, "The Law and the Prophets," p. 297.

imaginative vision; he was too near the era of fulfillment for that (cf. his contemporary Ezekiel, Ezek. xii, 21–23). There was nothing apocalyptic or recondite in his word; it was a message to the ear. He dealt with the immediate issues and emergencies of his troubled time, things for which not pictured vaticination but conservative and old-fashioned principles were the proper solvent (cf. vi, 16; xxxi, 21). A contemporary of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, he felt as did they, but far more intimately, the imminence of the "day of Jehovah" (xxx, 7), the day momentous for Israel and the world. To him it was given, indeed, through a career of something over forty-two years, first to prepare his people for it before it threatened, and then to live and labor with them after the doom fell, through the two deportations of 597 and 586 B.C., dying at last (tradition says by martyrdom) in Egypt, whither he had been carried against his will and counsel.

The Book and its Author

In reading the Book of Jeremiah we do not get the peculiar impression of a speaker reënforced by a man of letters, as in Deuteronomy, nor the literary savor of a cultured and creative statesman, as in Isaiah. We feel rather the vehemence of the preacher and censor of morals, as he comes to close grips with the people, men of the Temple courts and city gates and public places. The impending catastrophe of national overthrow, for which his whole prophetic activity must be a deep-laid preparation, was too near and pressing to favor leisurely care for authorship. Accordingly, as a literary production the Book of Jeremiah is somewhat formless — rather an accumulation of utterances hot from their immediate occasion, or of biographical incidents preserved by a secretary, than a planned and consecutive structure. This trait was natural enough, perhaps, from the way in which the book was composed. Its substance consists of public utterances or rhapsodies which the prophet had delivered at various times and carried

in mind from the beginning of his career, and then, in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, dictated to Baruch, in the hope that with such repetition in written form they would have a better chance to effect their purpose (xxxvi, 1–4; cf. vss. 17, 18). The first copy, however, on being read to the king, was burned leaf by leaf by the king himself; who thereby incurred a severe personal oracle for his impiety (xxxvi, 20–31). "Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words" (xxxvi, 32). It seems clear that the book did not lose in vigor by rewriting.

The style of the book, more especially of the parts containing the prophet's earlier rhapsodies, is tense and impassioned, well-nigh to excess; nor is it wanting in the cogency of lucid figure and telling phrase, a quality which sends his words straight to their aim, evincing not only the fervid preacher but the born master of diction. Many of the most cherished and vital passages of Scripture are his. At the same time, as one reads the book at length, one becomes aware of a certain lengthy and profuse tendency, a fault perhaps, as we see in modern times, of a dictated style. Discount has to be made also for the too unrelieved monotony of denunciation and lament, the like of which has imported into our modern vocabulary the word "jeremiad." For the rest, the parts of the book relating to affairs after Jehoiakim's fourth year are largely the work of Baruch the scribe, and are to great proportion in narrative prose.

It is not merely by his literary power, however, but far more by his personality, that Jeremiah has left his indelible impress on the heart of the ages. His was a personality compounded to a quite wonderful degree of tenderness and strength, and revealed through a lifelong experience truly

tragic. Of a sensitive, self-effacing nature, which shrank from anything harsh or arbitrary, and which longed for sympathy and friendship (cf. xv, 10, 17, 18), yet a deeper impulsion within him (cf. xx, 9) caused him to be Jehovah's fitly chosen instrument urging a message which, whether in reprimand or in wise counsel, earned him only bitter strife and opposition. "For behold," was Jehovah's commissioning word to him, "I have made thee this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land" (i, 18; cf. vi, 27; xv, 20). This finely touched, intense nature of Jeremiah's, so full of the spirit of truth, was of untold significance just at this crucial period in Israel's spiritual history. It was the dynamic of the personal element in the prophetic word, the element of human appeal to the heart of man, making Jehovah's word no more a speculation or a doubtful dream but a fire and a hammer (cf. xxiii, 28–30). For this dynamic the time and the nation were ready. Jeremiah was dealing, it will be remembered, with a people whose leading classes were described by his contemporary Zephaniah as "settled on their lees" (Zeph. i, 12), living and thinking as if Jehovah were the same kind of moral nonentity as their idols[1] — or as Jeremiah himself puts it, "have walked after vanity, and are become vain" (ii, 5; cf. Psa. cxv, 8). To sting the nation to life from such spiritual apathy and decadence nothing could avail like the personal touch. It was this element that Jeremiah, less the prophet than the man, whose sternness though inexorable was administered in sorrow and love, was divinely chosen in this critical time to supply. It is a link in the unitary chain of creative prophecy. Visions of saving personality have already been vouchsafed to Isaiah (ix, 6, 7; xi, 1–5; xxxii, 1–8); they constitute

[1] See above, p. 210.

what we call his Messianic strain. Here seems to be a first stage in making the vision a concrete reality. It appears in the person of one who must strive and contend (xv, 10), and who is long unreconciled to his hard lot (xv, 16–19). It is the reverse side, so to say, of the grand prophetic design. Before the Chaldean exile, now so near, is over, we shall see a higher stage of fulfillment, in the personality of one who "will not cry, nor lift up his voice," and yet whose work will be potent in the long run to "set justice in the earth" (Isa. xlii, 1–4). In a very significant sense we may regard Jeremiah's career as an adumbration of and a counterpart to that of the mysterious "Servant of Jehovah," whose personality and work are portrayed in the Second Isaiah.[1]

What he was Called to Do

The full meaning of Jeremiah's prophetic call perhaps did not come to him all at once, nor while he was in the aggressive period of young manhood. It sounds like the fruit of age and reflection. We will remember that the first draft of his prophecy was burned (xxxvi, 23); we note further that this event occurred at the point in his career when his prophecy took on a more hopeful and constructive tone. The title of his book, too, names two periods of prophetic revelation, one beginning in Josiah's reign and the other in that of Jehoiakim (i, 1–3), — periods quite definitely distinguished (cf. xxv, 3–9). We can well surmise, therefore, that a sense of the tremendous depth and scope of the work he was called to do first became clear to him in his later and more reflective years, when he began to feel how inevitable was the overthrow of the Jewish state. His call, as he then reports it, puts into rather more definite terms a work of Jehovah's of which both Isaiah in his day (Isa. xxviii, 20, 21) and Habakkuk in this (Hab. i, 5) have had an apocalyptic glimpse. They had seen it, however, as spectators and dreamers; here it

[1] See the section relating to the Second Isaiah in the next chapter.

seems put as a practical duty on a man's shoulders. "See," is Jehovah's commission to him, "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (i, 10). An amazing work this, which only Jehovah's word, through this human spokesman, can avail to do. There seems to have been given to Jeremiah such a sense of the whole vast orbit of Jehovah's purpose that he is able to realize in some degree how much his work means in that little arc of it comprised in the character and world mission of Israel. It is this living sense of things that gives him courage and steadfastness for his appointed task.

In this commission, as will be noted, a series of strong metaphors resolve themselves into two contrasted factors, or tendencies, of the prophet's influence: a destructive and a constructive. We have already noted the somewhat formless character of his book considered as a whole. Only confusion is apt to result, in fact, from trying to conform it to a planned literary scheme. The spirit of the book, however, requires no such extraneous aid. The prophet's commission, as just quoted, is its sufficient key of structure. In applying this, however, we must needs bear in mind that the two factors destructive and constructive are not sharply distinguished in detail but mingled in varying proportions; and that they are expressed, and must be apprehended, in the intense language of spiritual realization. Jeremiah's power through Jehovah's word, "to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant," is exerted not in the councils of state but in the secret depths of human nature, the spiritual workshops of being. Hence his strong personal stress and feeling.

Let us consider in brief analysis these two factors.

The period of Jeremiah's career which he deems destructive, and during which denunciation and lament predominate, corresponds roughly to the period of his prophetic

work under King Josiah and up to the fourth year of King Jehoiakim. The prophet himself reviews this period in the twenty-fifth chapter (xxv, 3–6); and in both this and the eighteenth chapter defines the object of its destructive trend. "At what instant," is Jehovah's word, "I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (xviii, 7, 8; cf. xxv, 5). The object, after all, is not vindictive but remedial. It is not the nation's existence that he would destroy but the inveterate evils that like excrescences have fastened themselves upon it. "Go ye up upon her walls," he says, "and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her branches; for they are not Jehovah's" (v, 10). An element not of Jehovah has fastened itself on the people's character, sapping its integrity and exposing it to the danger of disintegration; and this parasitical growth must be thoroughly unearthed and uprooted. Such is the prophet's aim in his work during Josiah's reign, an aim which does not interfere with but rather deepens the reforms already in the air. But he has at heart an inner and intimate object which, from lack of a generally diffused spiritual sense, he can enforce only by appeal to the danger of military invasion and ruin (cf. i, 14–16; iv, 6; x, 22). Until the people can realize that their real peril is from within, they must be addressed in the objective terms that they can feel and understand.

The Destructive Factor

When, however, we inquire more specifically what there is of destructive tendency in his words, we find that he is concerned essentially to break down and uproot every influence that has wrought to mar his people's personal relation to Jehovah, and by consequence their national integrity. It all centers in their deep-seated idolatrous tendency, which has become a deadly blight on their character.

1. He introduces the effects of idolatry by reverting to the same fundamental figure that Hosea had employed of the kingdom of Israel a century before; he is indeed of similar temperament to Hosea, and stands in an analogous relation to the kingdom of Judah. Jehovah, he assumes as did Hosea, is a tender and faithful husband to his people; but they, undeterred by the sad example of Israel, have even more treacherously forsaken Him and turned to illicit loves and pleasures, or, as Jeremiah bluntly puts it, have "committed adultery with stones and with stocks" (iii, 9). In the same reckless disposition they have run about after the customs and culture of the big nations who seem to have set the pace of worldly success (ii, 18, 36; cf. v, 7, 8). This shallow infatuation has made them beyond others fickle and disloyal (ii, 10, 11). Worse than that, it has lowered them to a mental and spiritual standard unworthy of their native intelligence and national tradition. They have nothing to learn from foreign gods and cults; on the contrary, devotion to these is a degeneration. To Jeremiah the whole idolatrous business is a thing so contemptible, so vacuous, that men ought to be ashamed of it as if it were a secret crime (ii, 26, 27); and as for any intellectual value in it, he exclaims, "The instruction of idols! it is but a stock" (x, 8). In this feeling he shares with his contemporary Habakkuk, who, noting the idols of wood and stone that call forth the worship of the approaching Chaldeans, exclaims with disgust, "Shall this teach" (Hab. ii, 19)? The prophets are realizing not only the religious but the intellectual emptiness of the heathenism with whose allurements their nation has so long been obsessed; and if they set up a destructive campaign against the evil, it is to counteract a greater evil that threatens, "even the fruit of their thoughts" (vi, 19). By dallying with the seductions of idolatry the people are but courting their own deterioration. "Do they provoke me to anger? saith Jehovah; do they

not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces" (vii, 19)? "For my people," is Jehovah's introductory statement of the situation, "have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (ii, 13).

2. Nor is it this exotic culture alone that Jeremiah is concerned to eradicate. His spiritual intuitions go deeper. There are other things, native to Israel's traditional faith, which, because they have become dead forms or hurtful superstitions dissociated from personal righteousness, are doomed to go.

> For who would keep an ancient form
> Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

seems to have been a conviction to which his realization of things led him. Hezekiah, in his day, had had the resolution to break up the brazen serpent which had evidently become a fetish (2 Kings xviii, 4); it was a wholesome beginning of a constructive iconoclasm. Jeremiah, in the same sentiment, prophesies a time when the ark of the covenant, around which have centered some of the nation's most mystic ideas, will no more be brought to mind (iii, 16). But a more radical sweep than this follows. Seeing how, since city and Temple were miraculously spared in the time of Isaiah, the Temple has come to be regarded as a Palladium of safety apart from the righteousness its worship represents, he boldly takes his stand in the gate of Jehovah's house and proclaims, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, 'The Temple of Jehovah, the Temple of Jehovah, the Temple of Jehovah, are these'" (vii, 4), and goes on to stigmatize it as "a den of robbers" (vs. 11), — the same term which our Lord takes up and uses as a motive for his cleansing of the Temple (cf. Mark xi, 17). He promises perpetuity of residence in that place if they will amend

their ways and their doings; but failing this, their sacred Temple, its function outraged, is doomed to become like Shiloh (vss. 12–15). He intimates further that their system of sacrifices is not of the original commandment but added later, to the hurt of that simple, forthright obedience which is the one thing pleasing to God (vss. 21–24). This first prophecy against the dishonored Temple seems to have had little attention (cf. vss. 27, 28); but later in his career, when as a kind of last resort he repeats this threat of the doom of Shiloh, his words are bitterly resented, and he is in danger of death, until some of the elders remind the indignant princes that a similar prophecy was uttered a century before by Micah (xxvi, 1–19; cf. Mic. iii, 12). From all this it may be seen that Jeremiah accounts nothing sacred that is not sincere; as soon as falseness enters, or a cover for unrighteousness, its doom is deserved and sure.

3. Another indictment that Jeremiah has against his time is still more sweeping. It is against the leaders in thought and morals in whose hands is the education of the people. There is much in their work to be purged and corrected, doubtless because it, like the fashionable sentiment of the day, has caught the blight of heathen and decadent tendency. When Jeremiah, by the figure of the potter and the clay, tells his people that Jehovah is minded out of the misshapen character of Israel to make a new and comely vessel, he is met by the skepticism of men stuck fast in conservatism. The nation's educational activities, it would seem, are well organized; "the law," they say, "shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (xviii, 18). With all these lines of instruction in smooth and conventional running order, they need pay no attention to this outsider with his revolutionary notions; such seems to have been the sentiment in which Jeremiah's menace of danger was received. But Jeremiah's indictment pierces beneath their conventionalized

institutions. "A wonderful and horrible thing," he says, "is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof" (v, 30, 31)? He is severest, perhaps, upon the prophets, the men who ought to be his colleagues as spokesmen of Jehovah; they are men whose dreams are an echo of public opinion, whose personality is subdued to the corrupt standards of the times, and whose vaticinations accordingly, like water, cannot rise higher than their own source (see xxiii, 9–40). But the wise men also come in for their share of denunciation (viii, 8, 9; ix, 23, 24); "the false pen of the scribes," he complains, "hath wrought falsely," as if somehow they had perverted the truth of things. A class of men not hitherto mentioned in prophecy, also, are included in Jeremiah's comprehensive censure: the shepherds, — a general term for the princes and rulers, whose function is to fold and feed the flock of Jehovah, and who like the rest are false and rebellious (ii, 8, margin; xxiii, 1–4; cf. Ezek. xxxiv). All this amounts to a sweeping indictment of the cultural institutions of Israel, as they have lapsed into decadence from the standard dictated by loyalty to Jehovah. "For my people," is Jehovah's summary, "are foolish, they know me not; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (iv, 22).

We have thus seen with what sad thoroughness Jeremiah took the destructive factor of his mission to heart, emphasizing every demand of it almost as if it were final, and yet with each indictment infusing a gracious and saving element. The breaking down and the uprooting were done not in vengeance but in presageful love. It was like a wise clearing of the ground for a building and planting which should be as noble as the preparation was thorough. And let us pause here to note how timely all this severity was.

For soon, while the prophet was still living and active, the long impending transplantation of the people would come, when, on new and unhallowed ground, the splendid glamours of idolatry in its home would be forced upon their sight, while all the ritual and traditional props by which they had buttressed up a heedless religion would be gone. Well for them that the crude ugliness of idolatrous culture and the futility of insincere forms had been so strenuously laid bare; it was an essential prophylactic for the crisis to come.

The Constructive Factor

In the tone of Jeremiah's prophecies of the second period, under Jehoiakim and his successors, while there is no lack of sharp censure and severity, the constructive predominates. A new note of encouragement and promise takes the place of the former voice of denunciation and lament. This transition is definitely announced in terms of the prophet's original commission. "And it shall come to pass," is Jehovah's word, "that, like as I have watched over them to pluck up and to break down and to overthrow and to destroy and to afflict, so will I watch over them to build and to plant" (xxxi, 28). This intimates that the prophetic activity yet to come will be a contribution toward the constructive factor of Jehovah's purpose. So indeed it turns out; but because the constructive design is founded on a principle new and strange to the thoughts of men, it must create its fit audience and following slowly, making its way through contempt and persecution to positive results which in the present are germinal and secret. Still, it is the pioneer work in a building and planting for a limitless world and for eternity; it will reveal itself as men are ready for it.

Mingled with the prophecies of this period are passages from the biography of Jeremiah written by his secretary Baruch; which passages, written in narrative prose, serve in part to show the circumstances under which the prophecies were uttered, but are not very mindful either of chronological

or topical order. But for the light they throw on the indignities and sufferings that his message elicited, and on his consistent steadfastness through them all, these biographical incidents are an invaluable contribution to his constructive work, making him not only a proclaimer but a living embodiment of it. As such he is the first of three great personalities in whom the supreme meanings of Israel's prophetic era come to vital expression. It is with the prophecy itself, however, rather than with details of the biography, that we are at present concerned.

1. To get at the inwardness of this constructive factor of Jeremiah's commission, we will go back a moment to the reign of Josiah, when he was engaged predominantly in the irksome work of breaking down and uprooting the inveterate evils of Judah. His work began, it will be remembered, when the nation, under its pious and blameless king, was engaged in a campaign of Temple repair and reform; which work five years thereafter was made enthusiastic, not to say fanatical, by the discovery of the Book of the Law in the Temple, and the hearty response of king and people to it, as to the ancient covenant given by Moses.[1] A notable reform this, one of the great landmarks of Israel's history; it has seemed strange to many that Jeremiah takes so little notice of it. He does indeed counsel obedience to it, giving it his sincere "Amen" (xi, 1–8), but in a way which, as compared with his usual vehemence, seems rather lukewarm; and in the conspiracy of opposition to it which he encounters in his home town (cf. xi, 21) he seems to recognize an element of futility in the covenant itself. Good as far as it goes, it is not penetrative enough, not self-vitalizing; it is a thing, after all, imposed from without. But the revived idea of the covenant sets him thinking; and while he goes on with his destructive work the thought of a new covenant is germinating within him, a covenant which shall really be

[1] See above, p. 220 f.

a mutual accord between man and God. By the time he has reached the transition to the constructive factor this thought is so matured that it is made the basal principle of Israel's new life, and indeed strikes the highest note that the prophetic ideal has hitherto reached. "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Jehovah': for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (xxxi, 31–34). This ideal of self-subsistent personality in conscious fellowship with Jehovah is the concept that has underlain all his work of negation, making its severity truly remedial and constructive.

2. As a broken and dishonored covenant connotes a decadent state, so a new covenant relation with Jehovah, wherein not the communal body but the individual soul is the vital unit, connotes a new commonwealth renewed after its inner principle. For this Jeremiah has provided fundamentally in predicting the covenant itself. He prefaces the prediction by quoting a homely old proverb, which evidently expresses a very prevalent sentiment since both he and Ezekiel cite it, but which both say no more holds. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes," the proverb runs, "and the children's teeth are set on edge" (xxxi, 29; cf. Ezek. xviii, 2). No more, say both prophets, shall this shallow

pretext of heredity (attenuated perhaps from the second commandment, Exod. xx, 5; Deut. v, 9) be used to excuse sin or explain misfortune. Henceforth individual character, with its individual responsibility and freedom, is to be the unit of values personal and communal. This broaches a doctrine wholly new in race-ridden Israel. And it comes just in season to prepare for the critical time when it will be vitally needed. Soon they will be in exile and foreign subjection, without a king and without central organization; each man must be self-directive, his own king as it were. Hence the new covenant, which embodies the spiritual virtue to build a new manhood and plant a new commonwealth. Jeremiah's idea of this regenerated state, which seems to dawn upon him as soon as he is fully convinced that the captivity is inevitable, comes as a kind of reaction, a resilient uprise of faith, as the saving virtues of the state are felt to be running low. After reviewing the line of kings from the good Josiah untimely slain, to Coniah (Jehoiachin) doomed to exile from his throne and land with no hope of a ruling successor (xxii, 10–30) and with a degenerate court ("shepherds," xxiii, 1, 2), he predicts as an offset to this, in the coming days, a well-cared-for people gathered from the scattered remnant of Jehovah's flock (xxiii, 3), and over them, raised unto David, "a righteous Branch," who "shall reign as king, and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (xxiii, 5; cf. xxxiii, 15). Such is Jeremiah's contribution to the Messianic idea; and the era associated with it will be so superior to the decadent past that its inauguration will be an epoch to date history by (xxiii, 7, 8).

3. These ideas of building and planting are no mere poet's dream; for Jeremiah is the least visionary of the prophets, having little use for dreams (cf. xxiii, 25–29); and it is his preëminent service to his people to make his prophecies practical, putting them into the works, so to say,

to be wrought into fulfillment. This is seen in his treatment of the first and most important deportation. As early as the fourth year of Jehoiakim (605 B.C.), when Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish gave the world-empire to the Chaldeans, he predicted the captivity of Judah in definite terms, putting its duration at seventy years and promising a return at the end of that time (xxv, 12; cf. xxix, 10). During that period all the nations, Jerusalem and the Judean cities not exempted, must "drink of the wine of the wrath of Jehovah," and the mind of men would be in madness and confusion (xxv, 15–29). This momentous ordeal was evidently a thing to be met not with dismay but with wisdom and enlightened faith. When, therefore, eight years after this prediction, the siege and surrender of Jerusalem occurred, Jeremiah, though at first bewildered by the banishment of King Jehoiachin (Coniah) and his household (xxii, 24–30), apparently took the event as a matter of course; when indeed he saw that the surrender comprised the sterling citizenry of the state (cf. 2 Kings xxiv, 14), he regarded it (see his vision of the figs, chap. xxiv) as a providential separation of the good elements from the bad, the sound and saving remnant from the herd of corrupt and decadent. To these "good figs," now domiciled in the land of the Chaldeans, he applies his favorite constructive metaphors: "For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up" (xxiv, 6). It is with these that the hope and redemption of Israel lies. From this time onward his plans and cares are as truly with these exiles as with those who have remained at home; and when a little later the too superficial prophets who have accompanied Jehoiachin stir up the community in Chaldea with false hopes of a speedy return, he writes his famous letter to them, reminding them of their seventy years' appointed time, and

advising them to make themselves homes and maintain family and communal life as if their stay were to be permanent, "and seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto Jehovah for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (xxix). With a national transplantation that is so full of meaning for Israel's larger mission and destiny he cannot reconcile a short captivity, much as he would like to do so (cf. xxviii). The constructive factor of his work is concerned with a development of character which requires time and experience in the larger world of Jehovah's purpose, and this exile is his strange yet gracious means thereto. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Jehovah, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end" (xxix, 11). Accordingly, the first captivity, brought about by the peaceful surrender of King Jehoiachin and the best elements of the nation, is taken by the prophet as a matter of course, as a step in the development which Jehovah has in purpose for them.

Equally was this calm confidence in the truth of his prophecy manifested on the eve of the final deportation, when he was in prison for predicting the disaster to king and city, and when, as it would seem, the beleaguering army was encamped even in his home town two miles away. He had prophesied eventual return; return therefore was a matter of course, not of uncertainty. Accordingly, in the face of this seeming hopeless outlook, he bought an ancestral field in Anathoth, and executed the deed with all care and legality, because — "thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land'" (xxxii, 15; 42–44).

The immediate effect of the first captivity on the prophet's mind was to clear up the prophetic situation in Israel. This is shown in his homely vision of the two baskets of figs (xxiv): "the good figs, very good; and the bad, very

bad, that cannot be eaten, they are so bad." This vision he uses to discriminate between the people who have gone to Babylon, the element destined to peace and prosperity and eventual return, and the poorer sort who remain, the element destined to eventual dispersion and unrest and scorn. His sympathy and promise are with the former; with the latter he must remain in thankless labor until his own enforced exile and death. It is a labor hopeless of any triumphant outcome; its prophetic substance, not new oracles but counsels and warnings for the immediate occasion; and its literary vehicle, not impassioned rhapsody but mainly the biographical reports of his secretary Baruch.

Between the Two Captivities

During the eleven years intervening between the two captivities (597 to 586 B.C.), accordingly, Jeremiah's chief concern with his people was to keep them from indulging false hopes of deliverance from the Chaldeans (cf., for example, xxxvii, 5–10), and to emphasize the unchangeable truth of the predictions he had already made. To every anxious inquiry on the part of king or leaders he returned the consistent answer: they must come under the hand of the king of Babylon, and their city must be destroyed (cf. xxxiv, 1–5; xxxviii, 14–23). And when the Chaldean army drew near to besiege the city, he counseled them to save their lives by surrender (xxi, 9; xxxviii, 2). For this he suffered a loathsome imprisonment on the charge of treason, and came nigh to death (xxxviii, 4–13). But just this counsel was in the consistent line of his common-sense view of life; it came too at a time, already taught by one experience, when surrender would mean not desperation but faith and courage. It was, to be sure, a new lesson in a world all too inured to treacheries and atrocities between nations. But there is evidence that in the years succeeding it was an element in the redemption of Israel. In a sense we may regard it as the keynote of the strong religious spirit of the exile. It means much for nation or individual

to prove by wise experience that "the conquest of Fate comes not by rebellious struggle, but by acquiescence." And to the better remnant of Israel it was given, in this Chaldean captivity, to exemplify this on a national scale, though the prophet's immediate counsel went unheeded.

This later period of Jeremiah's life, however, was not without its larger work in literary prophecy. Through his amanuensis Baruch he composed a series of oracles, or burdens, on the surrounding nations (xlvi–li), beginning with Egypt, as the battle of Carchemish brought her under the dominion of Chaldea (xlvi), and ending with the doom of mighty Babylon herself (l, li), who, after the appointed seventy years were completed, must in her turn drink, like all the other nations, of the wine of Jehovah's wrath (xxv, 12–31). The oracles addressed to these nations — Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Elam — are mostly of unrelieved doom; though there is an occasional promise that Jehovah "will bring back the captivity" of some people (cf. xlviii, 47; xlix, 6, 39). His warrant for the prophecies on the nations outside of Israel is in the terms of his original commission, for he feels that Jehovah has set him "over the nations, and over the kingdoms" (i, 10). It belongs also to his message of peace and redemption for Israel, so soon to be swallowed up in the maw of the Chaldean monster (cf. li, 34); for the time of Chaldea also would come, and Israel, delivered, would have no occasion to fear, but rather to bless the discipline of her ordeal. One is inclined to call it not only the culmination of Jeremiah's untold service to his nation, but the high-water mark of prophecy itself, when in the face of all their calamities and all their sins he leaves with them this parting word: "But fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Fear not thou,

O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah; for I am with thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will no wise leave thee unpunished" (xlvi, 27, 28).

Thus the period of Israel's literary history which I have called The Formative Centuries goes out in a burial of exile and sequestration, but also in a great courage of hope; and already from the midst of the exile a disciple of Jeremiah who went to Babylon is striking the note of a new era. "Son of man, what is this proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, 'The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth'? Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel: but say unto them, 'The days are at hand, and the fulfilment of every vision'" (Ezek. xii, 22, 23). In the stimulating conditions of a transplanted nation it is time for the words of prophet, lawgiver, and sage to work their destined effect; for the literature of ages to draw toward that revised, collected, and coördinated form which will make it a people's Bible. To trace this development will be the endeavor of the ensuing book.

BOOK II

THE PEOPLE OF A BOOK

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. — JEREMIAH

We really learn only from those books which we cannot criticise. The author of a book which we could criticise would have to learn from us. — GOETHE

THE PEOPLE OF A BOOK

BY THIS historic phrase, applied by Mohammed to the Christians but equally applicable to the Jews before Christ, we may designate what the Hebrew people became as the result of the long educative experience which began with the Chaldean exile, 586 B.C., and extended to the coming and ministry of Jesus. They went into exile with a heroic history behind them, full of the tokens of Jehovah's special care and leading. They had already in possession a goodly fund of literature, historic, prophetic, poetic; and when the break-up of the Israelitish state came this literature was still in full creative tide, in what we have called the formative centuries. It already had in some form the prophecies of Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah of Jerusalem; the popularized book of law which we know as Deuteronomy; many psalms and proverbs compiled under King Hezekiah; and much of the early histories from Genesis to Kings. In close touch with the exile itself Jeremiah was giving his fervid and vigorous warnings in Jerusalem, and Ezekiel, beginning five years after the first deportation (Ezek. i, 2), was working among the exiles in Chaldea. But this varied literary utterance, scattered and hidden, was imperfectly coördinated and not yet adjusted to the newer times. It needed the touch of the editor and the scholar, the organizing sense of the man of letters, who could collect, revise, and proportion, according to a just appraisal of its import. The people must learn, as it were, to read the great stories, poems, and prophecies that had already been written, and to realize their undying value.

This was the more needed because, in spite of the promise and hope of which their literature was full, their national

and political existence had seemed to end in irretrievable disaster. From 586 B.C. onward the people, suddenly plunged into exile, had to submit to foreign domination, which after the return to their homeland continued with changes of rulers and empires, but with little hope of national independence. Prospects of success in a merely worldly and material career seemed to be closed. If then the prophetic purport of their history, and the high destiny foretold of them, was ever to be realized, it must come in a sense and with an application different from worldly, an outcome not yet clearly understood. In other words, a new depth and strain of meaning must be given to their literature, to make it timely for strange new conditions.

Accordingly, after prophecy has reached its culmination during the exile, in Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, the commanding figure of the prophet, with his impassioned and creative mission, gradually ceases to hold the central place in literature and public appreciation. He gives way to the scribe, or scholar, whose interests are largely centered in the past, and whose work is more critical and interpretative than creative. Under the care of the scribes the body of the nation's literature is first collected and edited, and so preserved for the uses of the restored nation. Important new works are added, as occasion calls, and the old works are revised and filled out with matter suited to the changed circumstances of the nation, but with reverent regard for the integrity of the old masterpieces of literary composition. Then in course of time, and by successive stages, this accumulated literature is classified and organized into a canon, or library; to the making of which are applied rigid principles of inclusion and exclusion. Later still this canon comes to be regarded as a bible, a holy book, with something of the structure and essential unity of a single literary work; which work becomes the main source of the Hebrew race's education in religion, morals, and law. Thus, to an extent

far surpassing any other race of antiquity, the Jews became a people grounded in the knowledge of their racial idea, and of the meaning of their history, the people of a book.

In the large sense, then, we may say, it is the business of this Jewish people, through the nearly six centuries that intervene from the exile to the coming of Christ, to put into form and order the book of their life, that is, to articulate the living idea for which as race and people they exist, and to get this ingrained in the mind of all classes of the people. For this great mission they have been gathering rich material, which in spite of their dispersion and subject political condition still has unabated power to inspire and encourage. As an independent state, maintaining a political autonomy among the empires of the earth, their career is closed; but as a community of individuals, with strong racial and religious solidarity, their new career is just opening. Their mission is to build up the ideal of life anew, not from the corporate but from the personal and individual unit (cf. Jer. xxxi, 29–34; Ezek. xviii, 1–4). For this object their formative centuries have already developed the organic principles. It remains to make these a spiritual power in the individual heart, in order that the body of the nation may be cultured and sound through and through; and so, with the discipline of exile and return from it they enter upon a new era, which will date no more from Egypt but from Chaldea (see Jer. xvi, 14, 15; xxiii, 7, 8), and the lands whither their God, for their salvation, had driven them.

CHAPTER VI

LITERARY FRUITS OF THE EXILE

[From 586 to 516 B.C.]

WHEN the Jewish people were exiled to Chaldea, the motive of the deportation was involved in a vast scheme on the part of the young king Nebuchadnezzar for the upbuilding of a world empire and a capital which should be, and which accordingly became, one of the wonders of the world. In the words of a modern historian: "Nebuchadnezzar needed builders for his city, and he needed a population for it when built. He must have husbandmen for his fields, artificers and traders for his commerce, soldiers for his armies, sailors for his ships, slaves for his palaces. His foreign wars gave him what he sought. When a country was subdued or a city taken, the best of its inhabitants, the strongest and bravest and most capable, were conveyed forthwith to Babylon. Both Greeks and Jews describe this process under the same metaphor — that of sweeping as with a dragnet (see Hab. i, 15). Other lands were emptied, that the great city might be filled. Sometimes almost the entire population of a conquered state was swept into its vast *enceinte*, or dispersed through the various towns and villages of Babylonia, the central province and nucleus of the Empire. From the ancient cities of Egypt, from the pasture-lands of Syria, from the great seaports of Phœnicia, the captive multitudes poured into Babylon. The Jews were just such subjects as a king like Nebuchadnezzar required; and so once and again his armies appeared in Palestine, and carried off, in relays, all save

Motive of the Deportation

the dregs of the nation. Nebuchadnezzar required citizens; Jehovah sought a people purified by expatriation." [1]

This motive of Nebuchadnezzar's conquests was very different from what had actuated the Assyrian kings, Sargon and Sennacherib (722 and 701 B.C.), when the northern kingdom fell and the cities of Judah were ravaged. Their motive had been pillage and lust of military glory, and their aim was to break the spirit of the nations they conquered. Nebuchadnezzar's motive was to a greater extent civilizing and upbuilding. If his deported subjects were tractable they were treated in such a way as not to forfeit their self-respect or liberty of opinion and worship. They were in fact more like a transplanted citizenry than like despised slaves.

The Successive Relays of Captivity

As intimated above, they went, so to say, in relays. It was in 604 B.C. that the seventy years' term of exile (cf. Jer. xxv, 11, 12; Dan. ix, 2) virtually began; when Nebuchadnezzar, in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim (2 Kings xxiv, 1), appeared before Jerusalem and, forcing the weak Judean monarch to transfer allegiance from Pharaoh Necho of Egypt to him, took away vessels from the Temple and several youths of the seed royal as hostages, the latter to be trained for responsible positions at his court. Among these was a lad of about fourteen years old named Daniel (Dan. i, 1–4).[2]

Again in 597 B.C., when Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, had been king only three months, Nebuchadnezzar appeared before Jerusalem, the young king surrendered his whole court to him without fighting, and all the best elements of the nation, from princes and men of might down to craftsmen and smiths, were carried to Babylon, leaving behind only the poorest sort of the people of the land (2 Kings xxiv, 10–16). It was to this

[1] Hunter, "The Story of Daniel," p. 28.

[2] The author of the Book of Daniel, writing many years later, seems to have got his date ("third year") a year or so early.

company of exiles, likening them to "good figs," that Jeremiah gave his message of hope (Jer. xxiv, 4–7); to them also that some years after he wrote his friendly and reassuring letter (Jer. xxix, 1–14).[1] Arrived in Babylon, the captives, apparently without the infliction of special indignities, were distributed to their allotted places. The body of them was taken to Tel-Abib near the present Nippur, about fifty miles from Babylon, on the great irrigating canal Chebar; where as a community they were to make a home, cultivate their fields, adapt their old customs to new conditions, and become citizens of this strange crowded land. It was apparently here, or in some such place as this, that they received Jeremiah's letter of good advice.

Jehoiachin the king, in Babylon, became the royal prisoner of Judah; and we lose sight and direct report of him for thirty-seven years.

Zedekiah, the uncle of Jehoiachin, whom Nebuchadnezzar had installed as regent in Jerusalem on oath of good behavior, after an uneasy and vacillating reign of eleven years, drew the wrath of the Babylonian monarch again upon Jerusalem; and the city was besieged and taken, the Temple destroyed, and Zedekiah was caught trying to escape, his sons slain before his eyes, and he, his eyes put out, was carried in chains to Babylon, where he died. Thus the Judean state was broken up in untold horrors of siege and battle, and the people were scattered, some to Egypt, some to surrounding lands, and some to Babylon. This, the last relay of captivity, was in 586 B.C. It was the event commemorated in the Book of Lamentations, a disaster sharing with the final destruction of the Jewish state in the mourning observed at the Jews' Wailing Place in Jerusalem.

From the elements thus transplanted at different times to Babylon we are to get an idea of literary and cultural influences available in their new conditions and allegiance.

[1] See above, p. 243.

I. Literary Activities in Chaldea

The Jewish people were now in the center of the greatest empire of the earth, surrounded by all the splendors of a wealthy and idolatrous civilization, in contact with the busy activities of a prosperous monarchy, witnesses of and doubtless participators in its enterprises of husbandry, building, and commerce, and on the whole much more comfortably situated than they had been in their rugged land of Judah. With the keen worldly genius so characteristic of this race, the temptation would be stronger and subtler than ever to merge their national identity with that of their captors, and doubtless many yielded. But the stamina and resiliency of a people educated in the school of Jehovah was here meeting its supreme test. Out of this sequestered life, with its sense of common social and religious interests, and with the instinctively felt duty of maintaining racial loyalty and integrity, grew the literary fruits of the Chaldean exile.

Let us note and describe these, as connected with the personal factors with which they originate.

I

Ezekiel: Pastor and Reconstructor. While Jeremiah in Jerusalem, under the eleven years' reign of the substitute king Zedekiah, was still at his troublesome task of preparing the home people for their hapless doom (cf. Jer. xxiv, 8–10), a younger contemporary and disciple of his, Ezekiel, among the captives of the first deportation in Chaldea, was addressing himself to the strange new conditions of this foreign land and preparing his people for the nobler destiny ordained for them (cf. again Jer. xxiv, 4–7).

Of priestly lineage and calling, one of the higher class of captives carried away with King Jehoiachin in 597 B.C., Ezekiel began his active career five years later (Ezek. i, 2), and thus for the six years intervening until the overthrow

of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. was collaborator with the older prophet in the same cause. As long as the work of the pair was contemporaneous, with free interchange and understanding between Chaldea and Jerusalem, his prophecy, like that of Jeremiah, took the predominant tone of severity and warning (iv–xxxiii); but after the city had fallen and the political suspense was over he set the remainder of his message (xxxiv–xlviii) in the higher key of hope and reconstruction. In this timely work of his, searching yet eminently creative, he must be reckoned as one of the greatest spiritual builders of all time, though like all deep-laid work its results must germinate and ripen unseen.

The Mind of the Priest

The author of this prophecy is specifically distinguished at the outset as "Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi" (i, 3). In him, it may be said, the priest's function and ministry become typical. Jeremiah also was of priestly stock; but apparently before he was of age to enter upon the ministrations of the Temple (cf. Jer. i, 6) he was designated to a duty which caused him long after to be esteemed the typical prophet (cf. Matt. xvi, 14). With the venal and time-serving prophetic order of his day he was in frequent collision, both in Jerusalem and in Chaldea (cf. Jer. v, 31; vi, 13; xxix, 15–23), and by his sound spiritual sense brought out the prophetic office, as it were, into true and reasonable light (cf. Jer. xxiii, 23–32). With the priestly office, in turn, which had become equally corrupt, it fell to Ezekiel's duty to deal; and this he must do as an expatriated man, in a land where he must be without altar or organized service, and while for several years the Temple at Jerusalem was still standing. It was as if he must develop the office on a new line. In other words, the priest, laying aside his formal rites and trappings, must become a pastor, a counselor, a neighbor; striving thus to keep the true function alive and adapt it to more intimate and individual relations. Accordingly, as soon as he was

thirty years old (i, 3),[1] the age at which by ancient prescription he could enter upon his office (cf. Num. iv, 3), he received his first visions from Jehovah and his commission to be a "watchman unto the house of Israel" (iii, 17). It was doubtless from the influence of these pastoral ministrations of his that the Jewish religious services, which for the people at home were and continued to be centered in the Temple, came in time, for the Jews of the dispersion, to be distributed in the less elaborate observances of the Synagogue.

One can easily feel, throughout the Book of Ezekiel, that his was the distinctive mind of the priest, bent on making the conscience of the sanctuary prevail. The book is indeed suffused with the priestly atmosphere and feeling. He carries the sense of a responsibility as strong as life itself for the spiritual welfare of his people (iii, 16–21; xxxiii, 1–9); is scrupulous for cleanness of food in this unclean land (iv, 13, 14; cf. xxii, 26); has a holy man's dread of the insidious lure of idolatry (xiv, 1–5); and is reassured by the promise that Jehovah "will be to them a sanctuary for a little while in the countries where they are come" (xi, 16). More than this, his visions of Jehovah's glory, vouchsafed while yet the city stands, deal with the outraged Temple service in Jerusalem (viii–xi); and after the downfall of the state his constructive care and planning are devoted to the reëstablishment of Temple and service for the captives on their return (xl–xlviii). All this is of the essential priestly consciousness and temperament, reflecting a mind that by hereditary tradition and training demands a pure and orderly system of worship. In the absence of liturgical apparatus, however, he must needs resort to more intimate and personal methods than at home; doing his work not by temple and altar but by neighborly conference

[1] So I am disposed to interpret "the thirtieth year" (i, 1), though there are differences of opinion as to what this means.

and counsel, and by literary portrayal. So the priest becomes the pastor; the preacher, who may perhaps have been debarred from public address (cf. iii, 25, 26), becomes the inventive man of letters.

Composition and Style of the Book

As regards its structure, the Book of Ezekiel, though its general movement is lucid enough, betrays to some extent the naïveté of an author to whom the art of literary invention is new. It should be noted that his seems to have been one of the earliest books to adopt the written as distinguished from the oral type, and his sense of organism is naturally somewhat undeveloped. He has not yet worked out the idea of a logically interrelated structure, wherein part rises out of part and makes for consecution and climax. The framework of the book, if such it can be called, is like that of a diarist or journalist; the happening in time seeming to have a greater logical value in his mind than it has in the coordination of ideas. Accordingly, he arranges (or records) his material according to the dates when messages from Jehovah came to him; which dates are scrupulously noted, mostly through the years that intervened before the downfall of the Jewish state. Two exceptions occurring, wherein the prophet puts an oracle out of its chronological order for the sake of logical continuity, may be noted as an indication of his developing sense of organism; namely, xxvi, xxvii, the eleventh year put with the ninth, and xxix, 17–20, the twenty-seventh year put by way of correction with the tenth.

NOTE. *Ezekiel's Structure.* The following table gives Ezekiel's dates:

"Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (i, 1, 2).

All notes of time after this refer to the years of the continuance of the captivity, beginning at Jehoiachin's deportation, 597 B.C.

1. Fifth Year of Captivity, 592 B.C. Chapters i–vii. Beginning fourth month, fifth day (cf. above, thirtieth year).

2. Sixth Year of Captivity, 591 B.C. Chapters viii–xix. Beginning sixth month, fifth day.

3. Seventh Year of Captivity, 590 B.C. Chapters xx–xxiii. Beginning fifth month, tenth day.

4. Ninth Year of Captivity, 588 B.C. Chapters xxiv, xxv. Supplemented by corrected oracle on Tyre, dating from eleventh year (first day of month), 586 B.C. Chapters xxvi–xxviii. Beginning tenth month, tenth day.

5. Tenth Year of Captivity, 587 B.C. Beginning tenth month, twelfth day. Oracles on Egypt, chapters xxix–xxxii. Other dates intercalated, eleventh year, third month, first day, chapter xxxi, and twelfth year, twelfth month, first day, chapter xxxii.

6. Twelfth Year of Captivity, 585 B.C. Chapters xxxiii, 21–xxxix. Beginning tenth month, fifth day, when a fugitive arrived in Babylon and announced the fall of Jerusalem.

7. Twenty-fifth Year of Captivity, 572 B.C. Chapters xl–xlviii. Beginning in the opening of the year, tenth day of the month.

[The passage on the futile siege of Tyre, xxix, 17–20, dating from the twenty-seventh year of captivity, first month, first day of the month, is Ezekiel's last dated prophecy, 570 B.C., ten years before the release of Jehoiachin from prison.]

The style of the book, while vigorous and vivid, shows similar marks of a literary art not quite subdued to a limpid repose and naturalness. The staring effects of style with which the work abounds — visions, symbolic figures, parables, acted prophecies — seem to a degree self-conscious and elaborated. In the descriptive passages, too, the choice of details is rather accumulative than selective, as if the author had not mastered the art of making a little description go a good way. One can feel this everywhere in the symbol (for example, iii, 1–3; xlvii, 1–12), imagery (for example, xvii, 1–10), and acted prophecy (for example, iv, 1–8) with which his work is alive.

The most salient trait of Ezekiel's style, perhaps, is his extraordinary realistic and visualizing sense. Every idea seems to stand out in concrete form and measure and color, as if the matter-of-fact observer were usurping the idealizing consciousness of the poet. This visualizing power may be felt

in such passages as his celebrated vision of "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah" (i, 4–28), described thus in periphrastic terms which virtually evade the actual *sight* of God; his realistic vision of the charnel valley (xxxvii, 1–15); and in the architectural details of the projected new temple (xl–xlii), in which last the poet yields place to the artisan. In several cases his intense realization of things has the effect of clairvoyance (for example, viii, 3–18; cf. xxi, 21, 22) or telepathy (xxiv, 2). No other prophet has this power in such degree. It is as if, after all the dim ways through which Jehovah had led his people, the prophet felt himself walking almost in the blaze of fulfillment (cf. xii, 21–24), and as if his style gathered realism from it.

The Setting of Mystic Vision

The vision of the glory of Jehovah, with which the Book of Ezekiel opens, is not to be regarded, for its literary meaning, as a mere *tour de force* of description serving to introduce the prophet's account of his call and commission. It would be an extravagant disproportion of means to ends if that were all. Rather it constitutes the setting for the most searching and poetic conception of the whole book.

True, the vision does serve a very salutary purpose as related to the living faith of the prophet and his expatriated countrymen. It heartens them with the reassuring discovery that Jehovah's presence is not confined to the homeland, or to the Holy Place still standing in Jerusalem. They can dismiss that ancient folk-notion; for He has appeared here in this idol-ridden land of Chaldea, has given His priest-prophet a specific and practical ministry, and inspired him to say, "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Whereas I have removed them far off among the nations, and whereas I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a sanctuary for a little while in the countries where they are come" (xi, 16). This is much, is of untold significance to Israel in this time of ignominy and sequestration.

But more than this. The successive appearances of the vision (for the appearance in the first chapter is not the only one), as the prophet reports them, form in fact a kind of dramatic framework for the visualizing of Jehovah's inner lesson and purpose. The prophet next sees the vision in the sixth year of the captivity (viii, 1), and in Jerusalem, whither he has been transported in spirit to observe the profanations and abominations that are practiced in the very Temple courts. Chapters viii to xi give the account of it. He sees the whole Temple precinct and its secret places infested with various uncouth rites, men worshiping with their backs toward the Temple proper and in the avowed belief that Jehovah has forsaken the land (viii, 12; ix, 9). The glory of Jehovah is still there, however, to eyes that can see, as it was in the plain of Chaldea (viii, 4). But even while he looks, after certain mystic commands and oracles are given he beholds it rise from the inner fane, its ancient dwelling place, stand awhile over the threshold (x, 4), then with its convoy of cherubim remove from there, pause over the east gate (x, 18, 19), and finally, after various oracles minatory and comforting uttered, depart from the desecrated city and take up its station on the Mount of Olives ("the mountain which is on the east side of the city"). It is as if Jehovah were banished but still on guard (xi, 22, 23).

Here the vision leaves him to his years of prophetic and priestly ministry. When, however, in the twenty-fifth year of the captivity (xl, 1), he returns in spirit to Jerusalem, now fourteen years in ruins, and has seen completed the elaborate plans for the rebuilding and reconsecration of the Temple, he is taken to the eastward-looking gate, and there he sees again the same glory of Jehovah reappear "from the way of the east," its unseen station, and resume its residence in the rebuilt Holy Place, filling it with consecration and splendor (xliii, 1–5). It is from under the

threshold of this restored Temple that the prophet, when all is in its new order, sees living waters issuing eastward toward the Dead Sea region and deepening into a mighty river, a source of healing and purity and fruitfulness for all the nations (xlvii, 1–12).

Thus, as we follow the movement of this mystic vision, with its wonderful blend of realism and symbol, we find it a singularly poetic setting for the great ideal which possessed the priestly prophetic mind of Ezekiel, the ideal of a religion and cultus which should be as it were a new creation in Israel. We can gauge the informing spirit of his whole career from this; it was the inspiration that supported him in his years of striving with a "rebellious house" (cf. iii, 8, 9).

While Jerusalem Awaits her Doom

Toward this great end he worked consistently as occasion served, with his eye on conditions alike in Chaldea and Jerusalem, until in 586 B.C. city and Temple fell. More than half of his book, in fact, is taken up with oracles dated between the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity (i, 2) and the twelfth, in which latter year a fugitive from the siege reported to him that the city was smitten (xxxiii, 21). During that time he had a keen sense, at times almost clairvoyant or telepathic, of what was going on in the homeland: of the inevitable doom of the city (iv, v); of the shameless idolatries of the Temple and infidelity of the leaders (viii, ix); of the faithlessness of King Zedekiah to his word (xvii, 11–21); of the divination held by the invading king "at the parting of the way" and the decision to march against Jerusalem instead of Rabbah of Ammon (xxi, 18–27); of the beginning of the actual siege, wherein the city was to be destroyed in its dirt like a rusty caldron (xxiv, 1–14). All these things he makes the occasion of oracles, in which his realizing imagination ranges over a crowded field of figure and allegory, riddling parable (xvii, 2) and lamentation

(xix, 1), in his endeavor to bring home to Israel their perilous moral and spiritual plight.

With the exiles among whom he dwells, also, he is concerned; and mainly lest in this land of idols they be ensnared by the insidious lure and luxury of their surroundings, "taking the idols into their hearts," and losing in consequence the sanity, the poise, the singleness of vision which loyalty to Jehovah would ensure. What his plea amounts to is the alternative of debauching their own minds or keeping them straight and sound; and the prophet puts it in terms of their relation to the word of Jehovah. When the elders of Israel come to sit before him, as in old time the elders sat before Elisha (cf. 2 Kings vi, 32), the word from Jehovah is, "Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: 'Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Jehovah will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols'" (see xiv, 1–11).

Such is Ezekiel's arraignment of his people whenever the leaders come to him to inquire. In an earlier session with them (viii, 1), he exposes by his trance visit to Jerusalem the same idolatrous infection and estrangement as it is dominant there: "Son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery? for they say, Jehovah seeth us not; Jehovah hath forsaken the land" (viii, 12). And in a later session he denies their request for an oracle, on the ground that their inveterate idolatrous tendency, imbibed through all their history from wilderness days, has brought

them to the danger of lapsing from their noble traditions and becoming merged with the heathen. "Shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will not be inquired of by you; and that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, in that ye say, 'We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone'" (xx, 31, 32). Thus Ezekiel's contention, like that of all the prophets, is with his people's mind, the mind that an idolatrous imagination produces, a mind closed to the pure word of God. With their heart, too, their nature as expressed ideally in love and loyalty, he has a still stronger arraignment; and to set this forth he has recourse to the figure of adultery, used by the prophets since Hosea;[1] which figure he intensifies and follows into lengthy detail in an allegorico-historical review, chapter xvi, and in the parable of Oholah and Oholibah, applied to the two capital cities Samaria and Jerusalem, chapter xxiii.

Besides this fight for the disinfecting of the nation's mind, we have to note the noble team work that Ezekiel and his contemporary Jeremiah were doing together, Ezekiel to better advantage because, being removed from the turmoil of an inevitable crisis, he could estimate matters as it were from a distance and get their bearings and perspective. One main difficulty that both prophets felt in Israel was the lack of wise and upright leadership. The power of a masterful personality, some

> still strong man in a blatant land,

was sorely needed; the pair evidently did not realize what an influence they themselves were. "And I sought for a man among them," was Ezekiel's word from Jehovah, "that should build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none" (xxii, 30; cf. Jer. v, 1). A similar lack is predicted of the

[1] See above, p. 155.

great empire of Babylon, where the exiles now are, in Isaiah xiii, 12, and in the Second Isaiah xli, 28. True, there were prophets galore, ready to inflame the people's mind with radiant hopes; but both Jeremiah and Ezekiel have a sweeping indictment against them (Jer. xxiii, 23–32; Ezek. xiii); they are "fool prophets, that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing" (xiii, 3)—shallow, unmotived diviners, whose false words "have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. vi, 14; viii, 11); or as Ezekiel puts it in metaphor, "they have seduced my people, saying, 'Peace'; and there is no peace; and when one buildeth up a wall, behold, they daub it with whitewash" (xiii, 10). It is no time for shortsighted or ungrounded hopes. Both prophets, feeling the gravity of the situation, are virtually committed to the truth enunciated later by the Second Isaiah, "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked" (Isa. xlviii, 22; lvii, 21); and the perpetual fight of prophecy is not with armies or monarchies but with wickedness. So when the king of Babylon has cast the lot to invade Jerusalem, where "the prince of Israel" (Zedekiah) is nearing his fate, Ezekiel's oracle sets its hope on a personality yet to come: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (xxi, 27).

The weightiest idea, perhaps, in which the two prophets are at one, is the idea, deduced from a current proverb, that henceforth Jehovah's account with man must be not with the race or clan or family, not with vicarious merit or heredity, but with the individual soul. "In those days," says Jeremiah, "they shall say no more, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge" (Jer. xxxi, 29, 30). From this somber conclusion, however,

he goes on to predict the era of a new covenant, wherein each individual soul will have the light and law not in his neighbor but in himself (vss. 31–34). Ezekiel quotes the same proverb, asserting also its discontinuance (xviii, 2, 3); and draws virtually the same conclusion in more literal terms: "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (vs. 4). The chapter is taken up with a repetitious enlargement of this proposition, in which the prophet reduces to detail his idea of the things in life to do or avoid, and closes with an impassioned plea to turn from iniquity and make "a new heart and a new spirit" (xviii, 31). He takes up the same line of thought again in chapter xxxiii, 1–20, as a kind of final warning, before the doom of the city is reported. In an earlier chapter, too, he emphasizes the like idea of individual dependence, in his reiterated assertion about an imperilled land, that "though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah" (see xiv, 12–20). The time has evidently come when ancestry or pride of race or "pull" with renowned men can no longer be counted on for salvation; men's desert and destiny have become a personal matter; in this overthrow of their state, in this ordeal of homelessness and dispersion, each Israelite must learn, as it were, to be his own king. This is perhaps the most momentous and far-reaching lesson deduced by prophecy from the Chaldean exile.

It was not without a sense of discouragement and failure that the prophet finished his austere warnings and denunciations while Jerusalem awaited her doom. His picturesque and intense literary portrayals had perhaps overshot their mark, and from his nervous lack of sympathy and humor he had not allowed for shrinkage of effect. From the complaints he made, it would seem that the people came to

discount his severe vehemence as due in some degree to literary exuberance; which led to regarding him not as an *ex cathedra* prophet but as a social entertainer. At the close of one of his most lurid oracles he had to complain, "Ah Lord Jehovah! they say of me, 'Is he not a speaker of parables?'" (see xx, 45–49). And even when the long-dreaded doom of Jerusalem was reported, and he was deploring its fearful disasters, the word from Jehovah which punctuated it was: "And as for thee, son of man, the children of thy people talk of thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, 'Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from Jehovah.' And they come to thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but do them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass (behold, it cometh), then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them" (xxxiii, 30–33).

But perhaps his fervid pastoral work was having a more gracious effect than he deemed. Perhaps, after all, the stress of their idolatrous obsession was yielding to their own good sense, and they were coming to their ancestral heritage of simple faith. If so, they could discount his vehemence; the occasion for it was passing.

It has been remarked above that after the political suspense of the nation was over Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, left his note of severity and warning and set the remainder of his message in the higher key of hope and reconstruction.[1] For Ezekiel, however, with his priestly coloring of life, the suspense had not been political but religious; he was

[1] See above, p. 258.

concerned for the fate of the Temple and its service and for the religious fiber of his people both in Chaldea and Jerusalem. The turning-point, the pivot, of his prophetic strain, accordingly, comes not when, a year and a half late, the fall of the city is reported to him (xxxiii, 21), but when in the ninth year, two years before the end, he became aware by a telepathic thrill that the king of Babylon was drawing close to Jerusalem, and that its doom therefore was inevitable (xxiv, 1, 2). This seems to have been the date of cardinal significance to the people; noted as it was by the historians (see 2 Kings xxv, 1; Jer. lii, 4), and impressed dramatically by the prophet's mute grief for the death of his wife (xxiv, 15–24), by which act he made himself "a sign" to the house of Israel (vss. 24, 27). And his first thought is not, like Jeremiah's, for the horrors of siege and slaughter (his nature is not so tender and sympathetic as Jeremiah's), but for his beloved Temple and its sacred associations. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: 'Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes, the pity of your soul'" (vs. 21). With this event, which meant so much to him, was connected, as it would seem, a mysterious impediment of dumbness laid upon him at the beginning of his career (see iii, 25–27). When, however, he became aware of the investment of the city he received with it the prediction that his dumbness would yield when a fugitive reported the final catastrophe to him (xxiv, 25–27); and three years later he recorded the literal fulfillment of this prediction (xxxiii, 22). All this seems to indicate that Ezekiel's prophetic insight and conviction, ripening to the time when he could speak out and reveal the real trend of his people's experience and mission, was a thing of gradual growth. Pending that time it would not do for him to be a reprover (cf. iii, 26); he must await events in silence, speaking only as Jehovah opened his mouth (cf. xxix, 21).

Foregleams of a New Order

The first intimations of a coming new order are of a negative character, having to do with the fate of the neighbor nations with whom Israel's destiny is involved. The oracle pronounced on all these nations is, "And they shall know that I am Jehovah." Such will be the revelation of the new order to them. As soon as the prophet is aware that this is Jerusalem's supreme ordeal, when like a caldron she must be purged of her rust and dross and dirt (xxiv, 3–14; cf. xxii, 17–22), he devotes the chapters from xxv to xxxii to describing the fate that shall overtake these nations as a consequence of their attitude toward Jerusalem in this time of her calamity. His intimation is that Israel is destined to be a kind of spiritual touchstone for humanity, possessing a law of life which cannot be despised with impunity, and which will prove its universality when the nations that rejoiced over her downfall are gone. Such is the large idea toward which all the prophets have more or less consciously been impelled; and to Ezekiel it is opening up in this negative way. Seven nations are chosen for this strain of warning prophecy; with special emphasis on Tyre for her commercial arrogance (chaps. xxvi–xxviii, 19; xxix, 17–20), and on Egypt, "the great monster that lieth in the midst of his rivers" (xxix, 1–16; xxx–xxxii), ending (xxxii, 17–31) with an impressive description of Egypt along with the other wicked nations in the sepulchers of the underworld.

NOTE. In these chapters on the hostile nations we seem to come upon Ezekiel's sense of the purport of the prophecy long ago given to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii, 3). Following are the prophet's reasons for the evil fate that is to overtake these seven neighbor nations.

Ammon. "Because thou saidst, 'Aha,' against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was made desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity" (xxv, 3).

Moab and Seir. "Because that Moab and Seir do say, 'Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the nations'" (xxv, 8).

Edom. "Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended and revenged himself upon them" (xxv, 12). "Because thou hast had a perpetual enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time of the iniquity of the end" (xxxv, 5. See also above, p. 215).

Tyre. "Because that Tyre hath said against Jerusalem, 'Aha, she is broken that was the gate of the peoples; she is turned unto me; I shall be replenished now that she is laid waste'" (xxvi, 2).

Sidon. "And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor a hurting thorn of any that are round about them, that did despite unto them" (xxviii, 24).

Egypt. "Because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by the hand, thou didst break, and didst rend all their shoulders: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand" (xxix, 6, 7).

For the general attitude of the literary prophets toward historical movements and their estimate of character in national units, see above, pp. 141, 142.

When, however, in chapter xxxiii, the fugitive from Jerusalem brought the report that the city was smitten, the prophet, released from his long dumbness, entered at once on the reconstructive strain that increasingly characterizes the latter part of his prophecy. No longer addressing himself to the nations, he turns to his own people, as if he would trace to their fruitage the germs of good that are in them. He begins — taking up a strain which Jeremiah has broached and his own experience has stressed — with a chapter on the shepherds of Israel, who "feed themselves" and wrong the sheep (xxxiv; cf. Jer. xxiii, 1–4). As Jeremiah has made his denunciation the occasion of prophesying the raising up of the righteous Branch, who "shall reign as king and deal wisely," so by like sequence Ezekiel makes his censure of the unpastoral shepherds the occasion of a similar Messianic oracle: "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I,

Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken it" (xxxiv, 23, 24). Thus from the pastor's office, into which he has transformed his priesthood, Ezekiel deduces the same prophecy that Micah broached more than a century before from the little town of Bethlehem (Mic. v, 2–5);[1] making the oracle much more clear and comprehensive, as the time of fulfillment draws nearer.

NOTE. *The Shepherd Chapter.* It may not be superfluous to remind the reader here that the word "pastor," which has become so thoroughly naturalized in our language, is just the Latin word for shepherd; that is why we have used it to characterize Ezekiel. This beautiful thirty-fourth chapter is, in the shepherd imagery of the Old Testament, what John x, 1–18, is in that of the New; the relation of the two passages being that of presage and fulfillment. This chapter of Ezekiel is in large part the original suggestion of the celebrated lines in Milton's "Lycidas" (ll. 114–129), describing as it does

> such as, for their bellies' sake,
> Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold.
> Of other care they little reckoning make
> Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
> And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
> Blind mouths! . . .
> The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
> But, swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
> Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
> Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
> Daily devours apace, and nothing said.

After an interlude of reiterated denunciation upon Edom for her envy and hatred in this time of Israel's calamity (xxxv), the prophet proceeds from the thought of the shepherds with their divinely appointed Head, to the thought of the land and people over whom they are to have charge. True to his priestly temperament, he begins with the mountains of Israel, where for centuries has been carried on the foul and corrupting high-place worship, and whose desolation

[1] See above, p. 164.

he has already predicted (vi; cf. xx, 27–32). At this time when the enemy has said, "Aha!" and, "The ancient high places are ours in possession" (xxxvi, 2), he prophesies that these mountains will be purged and purified, will become populous and fruitful, and be inhabited by a regenerate people sprinkled with clean water, with a heart of flesh taking the place of their stony heart — a heart made into a fit abode of the divine Spirit (xxxvi, 25–31; cf. xi, 18–20). "So shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am Jehovah" (xxxvi, 38).

Following upon this glowing oracle — as if the prophet's intense imagination must go on to visualize, in all its process, the wonderful uprise of this coming new order — is his celebrated description of the valley of dry bones (xxxvii, 1–14), wherein at the bidding of Jehovah through his prophet the bones come together out of dust and dispersion and take on flesh and sinew, and at another bidding inhale breath and consciousness, "and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." It is a vision; but it is made actual in terms of resurrection — like a veritable coming out of the grave to new life. Such, in Ezekiel's view, shall be Israel's uprise and return. Nor does it mean part or remnant alone; the prophet is thinking on a national scale. By his acted parable of the two sticks joined together (xxxvii, 15–28), which follows immediately on this vision, he brings out into greater definiteness the prophecies broached long before (see Isa. xi, 12, 13; Hos. i, 11; Jer. iii, 18) — of the happy reunion of the kingdoms long separated, Judah and Israel, in their own recovered land, and under one king and shepherd, "my servant David," who "shall be their prince for ever." Here we may put the culmination of Ezekiel's book of prophecy — a book eminently characteristic of "Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi" (i, 3). The priestly mind and coloring are consistent throughout. His prophetic

dream is to see Israel reëstablished not on a political but a religious basis, with a law and spirit and cultus to correspond. "Moreover," he concludes, "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (xxxvii, 26–28).

An Apocalyptic Portent

But a larger horizon opens. He has measured the fate of Israel with that of the seven neighbor nations, and has seen his beloved people surviving their ordeal of exile, restored, reunited, happy in their purged and prosperous homeland. But there are other nations beyond, fierce and strange, who have not yet known the touchstone of Jehovah's light and law; and "after many days" they shall be visited, and Israel shall undergo a final and triumphant test. In describing this ultimate event Ezekiel launches boldly into apocalyptic — a type of prophecy in which he is succeeded by Daniel and a whole school; it is true of him as his sceptical people had said, "The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of times that are far off" (xii, 27). "Son of man," is the divine bidding, "set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" (xxxviii, 2). This Gog seems to have been a monarch who was a kind of emperor over several states or provinces. Jehovah's word to him is, "It shall come to pass in that day, that things shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt devise an evil device"; the device being the valiant ambition to help himself by the arbitrary might of militarism to the material wealth of nations that through their toil and virtue have become prosperous but are now dwelling defenseless and at peace — a

device which recent history has made very realistic (xxxviii, 10–13). Ezekiel interprets this, however, in larger terms. It is to be Gog's coming to judgment, when he will meet a fate for which his militarism has not prepared him (xxxviii, 7; cf. Joel iii, 9–13). In other words, this invasion of barbarous hordes is taken as the final uprise of the forces of evil against the righteous; and the defeat, which is absolute and ultimate, is attributed not only to the counter might of man, but to the mysterious power of Jehovah, who will rise in fiery wrath against the outrage, and make the invasion issue in the eternal confirmation of Israel's peace, "for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah" (xxxix, 29). This prophecy of Gog and Magog became an element of the later apocalyptic: it is taken up and adapted to a Christian application, with supernatural elements, in the last book of the Bible (see Rev. xx, 7–10).

From Presage to Finished Plan

Fourteen years pass before we have another dated prophecy from Ezekiel; and then, in the twenty-fifth year of the captivity, he again, as at the beginning, had "visions of God" — or rather a single vision, which, with elucidations, takes up the remainder of his book (xl–xlviii). It is his long-cherished ideal of a rebuilt Temple and of a reorganized cultus. This is so vividly realized in his mind that it stands before us in specific measurements and details, like an architect's and statesman's design. He describes it, however, objectively, as is quite the way of his extraordinary visualizing sense. "In the visions of God," his account begins, "brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain, whereon was as it were the frame of a city on the south. And he brought me thither; and behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate" (xl, 2, 3). This man

conducts the prophet about from point to point, measuring systematically all the parts of the Temple structure, with its chambers and galleries and courts, and explaining their uses; "for," he says, "to the intent that I may show them unto thee, art thou brought hither; declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel" (xl, 4).

All this reads like a masterly blend of the imaginative and the real; and the rest, though spiritual elements enter to color it, is equally so. In describing the setting of mystic vision, we have traced the movements of the "glory of Jehovah" onward to its return, after banishment, to his rebuilt fane.[1] When this impressive event has taken place (xliii, 1–5), the prophet hears one speaking out of the midst of the house; and a man stands by him to explain the furnishings of the Temple, and the laws and ordinances by which it is to be kept holy. This gives occasion to lay out a law of priesthood and service, an ordinance thought to be intermediate between Deuteronomy, which was brought to light in Josiah's time, and Leviticus, which was probably brought with the completed Pentateuch to Jerusalem by Ezra the scribe and published in 444 B.C. These chapters of Ezekiel from xliii to xlvi were at all events very influential in determining the final development of the ritual law.

All this, with its legal and architectural details, seems to a modern imagination prosaic enough; but that a genuine thread of poetry is woven with it, and that it is conceived more spiritually than literally, may be felt not only from the behavior of the divine glory but from the final vision of the waters issuing from under the threshold of the Temple and gradually deepening without visible affluents as they flow through the barren lands toward the plain of the Dead Sea, where they become the wholesome bearers of beauty and fertility and healing to all the land (xlvii, 1–12). It is a symbolical picture giving the spiritual key

[1] See above, p. 263.

to all this later stage of vision. From it the prophet goes on (xlvii, 13–xlviii, 35) in his literalistic way to divide the Holy Land and apportion it among the restored tribes, with their prince and priesthood, according to a diagram which in actual application is as Utopian as is the vision of the waters, revealing as it does rather his sense of order and symmetry than his memory of topography. It is his prophetic dream reduced to terms of sense perception and design.

So Ezekiel's long and labored book comes to its end, a unique monument of watchful fidelity and constructive genius. It leaves the vision of temple and city restored and whole; with this finishing touch: "And the name of the city from that day shall be, Jehovah is there" (Jehovah-shammah, xlviii, 35) — for, as we may note, he has not named it before.

II

Daniel: Mage, and Revealer at Court. As the next work to be considered in this period of the literature, the Book of Daniel, we enter upon one of the most significant yet one of the most occult books of the Old Testament. In form it is simple enough. It falls into two nearly equal portions. The first half (i–vi) narrates experiences of Daniel and his three Jewish companions, hostages and students of Chaldean learning in Babylon during the exile; relates also two portentous dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar (ii, iv), which seem, in a sense, to strike the literary keynote of the book. This part, written of Daniel in the third person, gives no hint of authorship. The second half (vii–xii), after mentioning Daniel as having had a notable dream which he recorded (vii, 1, 2), gives the rest of the book (except x, 1) in the first person. This part is made up of a coördinated series of dated visions, or revelations, four in number, giving a forecast of conditions and events from the year

after Nebuchadnezzar's death,[1] through a succession of world empires, to the eventual coming of "one like unto a son of man," who would inaugurate an all-surviving and eternal kingdom (vii, 13, 14; cf. ii, 44), before which advent, however, a momentous crisis must be met and weathered. It is to this crisis, indeed, — a time of great peril and profanation to the basic Jewish faith (see xi, 28–35), — that the movement of the book is steered as its concrete object and focus; the ultimate kingdom with its humane monarch revealing itself as an apocalyptic background.

Thus the Book of Daniel is an intimate compound of story and prophecy: story rising out of a cardinal epoch of history, prophecy a projection of alleged historic visions. Both these elements have traits so dissimilar to what we know of exilic literature that we must needs inquire here into their relations to their purported time and to the centuries succeeding. For, clearly, it is only in a modified sense — though not therefore less true — that we can reckon the Book of Daniel among the literary fruits of the exile.

The Literary Verdict: Time and Type

As we compare the two portions of the book a remarkable circumstance comes to light. The prophetic portion, though its expression is studiously cryptic, works up to a situation which sets closer to known historic fact than does the story portion itself wherein one would naturally look for factual accuracy. That is to say, the course of its visionary revelations draws together to an increasingly intimate conversance with historic conditions and details until, especially in chapter xi where the vision style is dropped, one cannot but recognize the career of Antioclus IV (Epiphanes), who in 175 to 164 B.C., by his despotic attempt to force Hellenic culture on the Jews of Palestine, precipitated the Maccabean uprising. Thus it comes about that at a point about 166 B.C., several

[1] The first year of Belshazzar (vii, 1); but the author apparently regards Belshazzar as the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. v, 18).

centuries after the Chaldean exile, the prophecies of our book become most concrete and verifiable. In marked distinction from this, the story portion (i–vi), betraying on the part of its writer merely such familiarity with the civic history of the exile as might be current in popular tradition, is inaccurate as to dates, dynasties, and the like, while it is concerned rather with the inner character and motive peculiar to the Hebrew mind. It is biographical, but not such biography as Daniel would have written or dictated. It lacks the color of experiences within one's lifetime or familiar environment. It harks back, rather, to the more primitive manner of the semihistoric legend, such as we read in the stories of the patriarchs (cf. especially the story of Joseph in Genesis) and of preliterary prophets like Elijah and Elisha. Recall here what has been remarked of that naïve type of literature.[1] "It is an accepted datum of scientific historians," says Professor A. R. Gordon, "that legend . . . always contains a nucleus of historical fact." Such nucleus is not often verifiable, as to its specific details, from contemporary evidence; this, however, not because the legend is untrue but because, taking the material fact for granted, it is concerned with a different kind of truth. In the case of Daniel, as we shall see,[2] an appreciable amount of contemporary evidence exists; still, the narrative portion of the book belongs distinctively to the category of legend. This trait, with its imperfect knowledge of historical annals, indicates, as does the prophetic matter already noted, a time of composition much later than the Chaldean exile, when factual minuteness was not essential.

This verdict of later composition is borne out by the literary type to which the book belongs. As to form the Book of Daniel has the traits of a species of literature which in times long after the exile came into favorite vogue, namely, the historical tale, or, if you please, historical fiction.

[1] See above, pp. 118, 119. [2] See below, p. 284.

Books like Ruth and Esther in the canon,[1] and in the apocrypha Judith and Tobit, are of this class. Some people are reluctant to attribute the fiction quality to any part of the Bible; the name, however, connotes not falsity but constructive art. Our book, having the indubitable traits of such art, bears much the same relation to the time of the Chaldean exile that Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe" and "Talisman" bear to the time of Richard Cœur de Lion, and is accordingly to be estimated on similar grounds. Of a work of historical fiction we require verisimilitude, truth to historical character and movement, fidelity to local and epochal color. Though in minor details it may make mistakes, or even readjust factual circumstances, it must, while creating a living picture of the past, earn credence by its essential conformity to known events and conditions. If the Book of Daniel is true in this liberal sense — and nothing that we know makes against this — it is a genuine literary product of the exile.

That it was so regarded from an age not long after its publication seems indicated by the fact that it was transferred to another part of the canon. Placed by the Hebrew scribes just after the Book of Esther in the third division of their canon, the so-called Writings (*Kᵉthubhim*, Hagiographa), it was ranked by the Greek translators (the Seventy, Septuagint), followed later by the Latin version (Vulgate), with the greater prophets, and placed just after Ezekiel. It was evidently deemed by these later scholars a contribution rather to history and prophecy than to *belles-lettres*, and so its fiction element was ignored.

The Book of Daniel as we have it is a unit in matter and manner, the finished work of one mind; and yet, along with this indubitable fact we must reckon another,

[1] To this list we might add the Book of Jonah, except for its dominating strain of allegory, making us hesitate to rank it as a historical tale. For Jonah, see below, p. 418.

namely, that in the original the book is written in two languages. More than half of the book, the portion from ii, 4, to the end of chapter vii ("here is the end of the matter," vii, 28), is written in Aramaic ("the Syrian language," ii, 4). This language, being related to the more classical Hebrew somewhat as the French is to the Latin, gradually supplanted the Hebrew as a more flexible medium for everyday uses and became the vernacular of the common people. In another way, too, it was analogous to the French. As early as the time of Isaiah and the Assyrian invasions it was a *lingua franca*, employed as French is in modern times for diplomacy and international intercourse (cf. Isa. xxxvi, 11); but only the Jewish leaders understood it then. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that when a century later the Jews in a body were deported to Chaldea, where the language was strange, they would avail themselves of this *lingua franca* and make it their all-round medium of communication. By the time the Book of Daniel was written, accordingly, the Aramaic was as generally the folk's language as Yiddish is in our day; while the venerable Hebrew was reserved, as now, for sacred and high literary purposes.

The Source in Folk Tradition

Looking now at this Aramaic section of the Book of Daniel, we note that what precedes it (i, 1–ii, 4) is merely introductory to the narrative, and that what follows it (viii–xii) is a series of visions and revelations supplementary in character, which round out and concentrate upon the Antiochean crisis the dream of Daniel in chapter vii. Between these lies the body of the story. In other words, the real heart of the book — all indeed that reflects the mind of the exile period — is in the tongue of the common people, the Aramaic.

This fact provokes the conjecture that the writer of the Book of Daniel had for his main source a folk tradition preserved in Aramaic and giving in popular story form the

experiences of Daniel and his companions. These would naturally be given not as they would be reported by one within the atmosphere of the court but as they would be colored by the imagination of a people proud of their kinsman's success and well aware of his stanch loyalty to the faith of his fathers. As related to the secrets of the court and its congested culture the reporters would be outsiders; but the hints of events that filtered through to them, as it were, would be reshaped in the image of their own sphere of thought. The result would take much the nature of the semihistoric legend; a legend molded, however, not so much by transmission through time as by moral and spiritual intuition. Such material the writer of the book, finding it to his hand, could work over in the same language and for the same class of readers, to meet the conditions of a later time. Such seems to me a reasonable explanation of the Aramaic source of the Book of Daniel. It goes back to a contemporary account — an account crystallized, as it were, in the penetrative insight of a spiritually gifted people.

Under the Surface of History

Such account, in the later retelling, could without loss of value bear inaccuracies in historical detail; could bear also elucidations due to a riper stage of prophetic presage. Here, however, we must face a new difficulty, namely, the dearth of reference to Daniel in contemporary annals. A personage so prominent in the state as he is represented to have been ought, it would seem, to be as widely known to history as to legend and literature. As matter of fact, virtually all that we know of him is what we get from the book itself. This of course does not constitute an *argumentum e silentio* for his nonexistence. Obvious reasons can be deduced both from Chaldean and Hebrew history for silence, more indeed than for publicity. The accounts of his career must naturally have come to posterity through channels under the surface of history — through the hidden experiences of the sequestered

people of Israel, in whose depths through all those years of exile was nursed a secret sense of divine choice and promise and deliverance. It would not do for these people or their leaders, prisoners as they virtually were, to speak out their hopes too plainly, still less for Daniel himself to identify himself openly with their cause. They must keep their national aspirations hidden, and let the word of Jehovah make its way by its own intrinsic superiority. Such, as we shall see,[1] was the attitude maintained by their prophets. It was their time to test Isaiah's ancient lesson of "quietness and confidence" (cf. Isa. xxx, 15; xxxii, 17).

Notwithstanding this, however, there are not wanting hints of the attitude of the contemporary Jewish mind toward their gifted young kinsman at the Babylonian court. We may be sure they kept proud and exultant track of him — perhaps built hopes on him. There is a passage in Ezekiel, written in the sixth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, which seems to indicate that the people were inclined to bank overmuch on Daniel's influence, with that of others, to promote their release. Speaking of the woes that are still imminent on the homeland — for there is no dissociation of interests between home and exile — the prophet strenuously reiterates, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah" (Ezek. xiv, 14, 16, 20). These words, if, as I think,[2] they refer to the Daniel of our present study, date from about the time when

[1] See below, p. 296.

[2] It must in fairness be owned here that others think differently. As Daniel is named between Noah, a patriarchal worthy, and Job, a personage of ancient tradition, critics not unreasonably regard Daniel as some old-time great man, well known to Ezekiel's readers and typical, but otherwise entirely lost to legend or literature. Noah could not well be omitted from a connection like this, here in the native land where, as common ancestor of Hebrews and Chaldeans alike, he would first come to mind. As for the name "Job," this will come up for later consideration; see below, pp. 467 ff.

this contemporary of Ezekiel, younger though of noble blood (cf. Dan. i, 3), was at the height of the wonderful distinction he had earned by interpreting King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (cf. ii, 48); at just which time also the exiles' hope of speedy return to Jerusalem, inflamed by their too enthusiastic prophets, was running highest (cf. Jer. xxvii, 14, 16). Like his prophetic colleague Jeremiah, Ezekiel, conscious of the deeper prophetic issue at stake, sought to disabuse his people's minds of the false hopes they were cherishing. To count on obtaining some sort of "pull," through personal influence at court, with the powers of state, was a presumption and a fallacy; they must abandon such vague notions and fall back on their own good behavior. His reference to Daniel, therefore, with this implication, seems eminently natural and fitting.

A later allusion of his to Daniel, made ironically in an apostrophe to the self-inflated prince of Tyre, speaks of Daniel's wisdom as already famous and proverbial. "Behold," he says, "thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that is hidden from thee" (xxviii, 3), — a taunt which takes for granted the ground of Daniel's eminence, at least among his fellow countrymen, as a man of extraordinary insight and sagacity.

Thus we have direct references giving contemporary gleams from under the surface of history. Independently of these, too, it seems almost necessary to postulate the existence of Daniel, or of some influential personage very like him, at the Babylonian court, during the ordeal of Israel's long captivity. Priests and pastors like Ezekiel were remote from political affairs; we cannot count on them; and yet that some one was influential, or some group, seems evident from actual events. How otherwise can we account for the release of King Jehoiachin and the special distinction shown him after thirty-seven years' imprisonment (2 Kings xxv, 27–30 = Jer. lii, 31–34); how otherwise for

the gracious consent of the Persian king Cyrus, when he had taken Babylon, to send the Hebrew captives home to Palestine (2 Chron. xxxvi, 22, 23 = Ezra i, 1–3) — not to speak of their comfortable and prosperous life in Chaldea, apparently free from indignities, at least during Nebuchadnezzar's reign? It looks as if, under the surface of recorded history, there were a place where Daniel just fitted in.

Of a Daniel whose fame so lived in the faith and pride of his people it is reasonable, without recourse to fiction, to predicate three things which may be confidently rated as matters of authentic fact:

First, that in a land and court filled with the artificialities and vagaries of heathen culture he preserved, though in high official station, the simple faith of his fathers and the steadfast attitude of loyalty to the inherited traditions of his race;

Second, that in matters of foresight and statesmanship he possessed extraordinary abilities; surpassing in their own learning the attainments of a people whose science and occult wisdom had long been the cultural standard of the world;

Third, that this endowment of his, with its more rational concomitant of practical efficiency, gained him a trusted position in the counsels and crises of state, making him thus an influential though latent factor of welfare, a real guardian and champion at court, through the critical period of Israel's exile history.

In this mediatorial character, which seems to answer to a deep strain in the Hebrew type, Daniel has notable parallels in Biblical annals: Joseph at the Egyptian court in patriarchal times, and Nehemiah at the Persian court more than a century after Daniel; both of whom like him, eminently faithful and efficient under alien masters, also rendered indispensable service to their own people in times of need.

Here then we have what we may confidently take as the factual nucleus of the Book of Daniel. It has the worth and the limitations of fact. It is external, not vital. The rest of the account, if we must put it in the category of legend and historical artistry, belongs no less truly to that prophetic insight which, sensing things as they essentially are, penetrates beyond the reach of external fact to the sphere of spiritual values. It is this latter quality of the work which now comes up for more definite consideration.

At the Center of World Empire

As we ponder the deeper relations of these Daniel stories we find ourselves spectators of a tremendously great event, nothing less indeed than the spiritual encounter toward which the whole strange course of Israel's history has moved. In brief general terms we may call this the encounter of Jehovah's light and truth with the world's dimness of lies, of the gentle solvent of conscience and righteousness with the brutal despotism of self-will and idolatry and worldly greed. This latter, compounded with the arrogance of conquest and self-inflated culture, has reached its most overweening stage. We see the encounter, of course, only at its first onset, and there is more beyond that remains unseen. But here, at the center of world empire, with all the elements in readiness, it is as if we had come upon the long-approached focal point in the campaign of ages.

Is this too high a claim to make for it? Consider what has led up to it.

Jehovah's campaign — we may call it such, since its avowed objective was conquest and victory — was sensed only vaguely and piecemeal by the line of prophets, for they had in charge the issues of their own time and race; but as we put their utterances together we see the steady development of Jehovah's counsels to this end ever since the beginning of literary prophecy,[1] — nay, since the original

[1] See above, pp. 135–137.

call of Abraham out of this very land of Chaldea to a land where he could initiate Jehovah's purpose of blessing to all the families of the earth (cf. Gen. xii, 1–3). From Chaldea, the cradle of religion and learning, back to Chaldea again, endowed with the principles of a saner religion and a sounder learning; such was the divinely ordered mission of the Hebrew people from the far-off patriarchal times.[1] The Scripture movement, setting out from Chaldea, has at length come round full circle; we can now, to some degree, gauge its meanings as it closes for the vital encounter. And what we first see is a young man, hostage and captive, standing before the mightiest and proudest monarch of the earth, and daring to tell him the truth.

Let us take brief note of the situation.

The encounter, brought about by King Nebuchadnezzar's disturbing dreams (ii, iv), is personal, the touch of man and man as it were on equal terms. It reminds one of Kipling's lines:

> But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

The two who face each other — masterful men both — may be taken as in a true sense the epitome, the spiritual embodiment, of their respective nations, each representing, as it were, his nation's developed idea. It is thus, I think, that the author was minded to portray them. We seem to see in them, as in a condensing mirror, two character products, one molded in the sane and simple discipline of Jehovah, the other in the confused superstitions of heathen cults, — two types reduced as it were to personal and individual terms and so posed that we can compare them.

[1] Cf. above, pp. 34, 35.

The monarch, personal epitome of "that bitter and hasty nation" against which Habakkuk uttered his woes (Hab. i, 6; ii, 4–20), is at once absolute and helpless. He is caught in the toils of his own unbalanced nature. On the one hand, having everything that an arbitrary will accountable to none can crave, — power of life and death, freedom from check or criticism, limitless command over vast ambitions and designs, — he has also the megalomania, the hunger for adulation, the motiveless self-will and caprice, that go with such unregulated power. On the other hand, though unaware of it, he is at the mercy of his learned and clever class, being the virtual prey and tool of "the magicians, and the enchanters, and the sorcerers, and the soothsayers, and the Chaldeans" (cf. ii, 2; iv, 7), whose vaunted learning, founded mainly on divination, is an elaborate guesswork, and whose answers to his inquiries are either time-serving counsels calculated to flatter his desires or subtle interpretations calculated to promote their own. All this seems to condense in one personage the evolved character — or rather the spiritual chaos — of a huge unwieldy state without formed policy or principle, a realm bloated with sheer bigness and material wealth and artificial culture; which, as soon as the white light of Jehovah shines in from above, betrays its essential hollowness and sterility. To such a spiritual atmosphere as this it is that the Book of Daniel introduces us. The story is consistent and homogeneous throughout: its various episodes — the golden image and fiery furnace (iii), the king's malady (iv), Belshazzar's impious feast (v), the plot of the lion's den (vi) — belong to one barbaric and unholy tissue. It becomes in later apocalyptic thought the type of all that is infamous in autocracy and debasing influence (see Rev. xiv, 8; xvii, 5). It is the polar opposite to the ordained kingdom of God.

What I have alluded to above as the white light of Jehovah came into this murky atmosphere not by censure

of evils as the prophets wrought, not by propaganda or vehemence at all; it came by the still strong presence of Daniel's personality. "The righteous shall live by his faith," Habakkuk had said of this crucial encounter of Jew and Chaldean (Hab. ii, 4). Daniel's experience is the victorious proof of this. He had become naturalized in Chaldean life and lore; could speak as an expert in its terms; the whole book indeed, in its dominant coloring of dreams and portents and mystic reckonings, is conformed not to native Hebrew thought but to the idiom of the Chaldean magi. He does not put forward the name of his God nor the claims of his religious faith; the name by which he is known at court (Belteshazzar) is compounded with the name of the chief Chaldean deity. He does not introduce exotic ideas into his interpretations. And yet there is a self-evidencing genuineness in his words, and still more in his stanch personality, which seems to clear the air and set things in true proportion and balance. Kings and nobles, turning to him in their perplexities, have the sense not only that "an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of dark sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar" (v, 12), but also, with sincere reverence and awe, that he was a man "in whom is the spirit of the holy gods" (iv, 8, 9; v, 11, 14). Here was one who had such commerce with divine realities as their guesswork erudition could not penetrate; his wisdom traversed their elaborate polytheistic cults, but they had nothing in their religion to rival or gainsay him.

What was the inner effect of Daniel's life on the Babylonian court we have no means of measuring. But one thing is clear: Jehovah, in His campaign of grace, had not left Himself without able witness at the center of world empire. Nor had He failed to impress upon King Nebuchadnezzar

through the latter's own dreams that the type of empire of which he was the "head of gold" (ii, 38), for all its wealth and splendor, was doomed to eventual failure. It looks too as if the king himself, as years and judgments came upon him, became more humble and humane, agreeably to Daniel's counsel (cf. iv, 27). It is notable how little the prophets have to say against this king himself; Jeremiah indeed calls him Jehovah's servant (Jer. xliii, 10), his denunciations being directed against the realm (cf. Jer. li, 11, 24, 25). Some searching experience, it would seem, as hinted in Daniel's dream after Nebuchadnezzar's death, so affected the spirit of the first great empire that from being a beast of prey with the wings of a bird of prey (lion and eagle) it "was made to stand upon two feet as a man; and a man's heart was given to it" (vii, 4). This dream, portraying a realm of which the king is the virtual embodiment, may imply the king's recovery from his bestial obsession to the upward-looking and humaner mind (iv, 34); it may connote also deliverance from the bondage of degrading superstitions to the influence of a gracious personality. One is reminded of Isaiah's prophecy of this same realm of Babylon, "I will make a man more rare than gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir" (Isa. xiii, 12). The king, with all the traditions of state and religion and learning upon him, must be enlightened according to the concepts of his own nature and idiom. To have such a genuine man therefore at his court, sharing in the realm's life and thought, a personal embodiment of integrity and wisdom in a confused and corrupted empire, must have been an untold force to open a way out of the sloughs of heathenism. And in such wise, according to this book, was ordained the career of Daniel, "whom the king named Belteshazzar," and whom for the wisdom and sagacity that was in him he made "master of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and soothsayers" (v, 11, 12).

How the Book Reflects the Prophetic Situation

Thus far, however, our study has dealt with Daniel only as a personal force and factor whose character was in itself a recourse and revelation. There remains to be considered the substance and theme of his prophetic disclosure,—for Daniel, we will remember, is in the revised estimate reckoned not among the novelists but among the prophets. And here the book, by reason of its composition in the midst of later conditions, creates a difficulty. This prophetic disclosure has been so complicated with the apocalyptic elements of the second half of the book that readers have been too unmindful of its essential identity with the continuous movement and ideal of native Hebrew prophecy. It has seemed to them like something exotic, outside the wonted prophetic channel. This, however, as a brief consideration will show, is a mistaken notion.

The prophecy is indeed put in unusual imagery and phrase. But the circumstances of its utterance explain this. It is prophecy in a new dialect.

In reality the Book of Daniel merely puts into the form suited to its fit audience what the Hebrew prophets are already predicting of the progress and triumph of Jehovah's campaign among men. The audience is Chaldean and cultured—versed therefore, as scholars and magi, in the literary symbolism of dreams and abstractions. The chief listener is imperial and autocratic—apt therefore to think and muse not on common matters but on huge enterprises of war and dominion. Nebuchadnezzar, his main conquests over, has earth and man at his feet; he is ready now to make his realm the exactress (cf. Isa. xiii, 4, margin) and his capital the wonder of the world. Already vague dreams are gathering head in his brain, to which his imagination and his boundless egotism can set no limit.

To this situation the prophetic disclosure of the book corresponds. It begins with the king's forgotten dream in

chapter ii, as elicited and interpreted by the coöperation of Daniel with the God who sent it; which dream indeed, as already remarked, strikes the keynote of the book's message. The dream, under the figure of a great image, is of a succession of worldly kingdoms, of which Nebuchadnezzar's is the head; all members of one great body of empire, a thing material, metallic, soulless, which being supported only by its basest elements iron and clay — the latter having no mingling affinity with the human (ii, 43) — is doomed, precious and baser metals together, to be broken in pieces by a self-moved stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, which thereafter grows to a great mountain, or rock, filling the earth. Thus is revealed to the ambitious king the type of empire of which he is the head, splendid but fatally weak; and over against it is portrayed, in like material terms, the rock-founded kingdom that is destined to prevail. "And in the days of those kings," runs the literal exposition, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (ii, 44). This prophecy makes connection with one of the oldest and most familiar Hebrew conceptions of God and His meaning for men. From old time He is figured as a Rock, with its connotations of refuge, stronghold, reliability (cf. Deut. xxxii, 4; 2 Sam. xxii, 2, 3; Isa. xxviii, 16). Here the Rock is endowed with energy and growth, and fitted into the king's dream of material empire, as if from a thing inorganic it had become alive.

Note. From this dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, which he had early in his reign, the whole prophetic vein of the Book of Daniel seems to have been developed; the dream of Daniel himself in chapter vii, striking into the same theme of the four great monarchies, follows it out with change of imagery but with corresponding dénouement, and the later revelations, viii to xii, concentrate an element of it upon a

crisis of history. It is to the interpretation of the king's dream and to the distinction that followed, it would seem, that Ezekiel alludes in his taunt addressed to the conceited prince of Tyre (Ezek. xxviii, 3).

The second dream of King Nebuchadnezzar (iv), being personal to the king himself, has little connection, unless by contrast, with the Hebrew strain of prophecy; it shows however with remarkable clearness how rudimentary must be the spiritual impulsions that could be planted in his self-regarding egotism, and how heroic must be the treatment that could avail to clinch them. Its mixed imagery is a step upward from that of the first dream. From conceptions of inorganic nature it has reached the stratum of plant and sentient life, and this is relatively noble. At first merely a "head of gold" (ii, 38), in his dream he is now a lofty and conspicuous tree, with its connotations of shade and fruit and shelter; but still his roots are with the beasts whose food is the grass of the field. His spiritual tendencies are not upward but downward toward the brute. To the brute he must accordingly revert for a season, in a terrible but remedial chastisement of insanity, that he may learn to look upward (iv, 34) and know, for all his pride, how insufficient he is to himself. In preparing him for this, Daniel urges upon him the first act of mercy and humanity associated with him. "Wherefore, O king," Daniel is bold to say, "let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if there may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity" (iv, 27). Such a lesson, apparently so new to the self-willed king, was no more than the ABC of the Hebrew standard of life; to him it must be enforced by calamity.

Nebuchadnezzar's first dream revealed the eventual rise of an all-subduing kingdom, hard and ruthless like a self-moved rock; that was enough prophecy of future conditions for his primitive spiritual plane. After his death, however,

when his successor has taken the kingdom, Daniel has a dream of his own (vii), which, striking into the same world vision as did Nebuchadnezzar's, makes transition thereby to the apocalyptic revelations of the later chapters. This time, however, by a change of imagery, the succession of kingdoms appears under the guise of beasts of prey and rapine, whose ferocity increases with each stage of empire until their doom comes. The first of these, a lion with eagle's wings, takes on, as already noted,[1] some human amenities (vii, 4) — an allusion, perhaps, to the chastened piety of Nebuchadnezzar's later life (cf. iv, 34–37). There is no tinge of humanity in the succeeding beasts, however; and the fourth, a nondescript beast with ten horns, is more strong and cruel than the others; and among the horns there comes up "another horn, a little one, . . . and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things" (vii, 8).

With the coming up of this "little horn," which from this time on is the central aversion, the distinctive apocalyptic strain of the book begins (vii, 9); it is as if it were the writer's occasion to make transition from legendary material to visions more relevant to his own time. What this time was, we have indicated.[2] The transition opens with a vision of judgment. "I beheld," Daniel relates, "till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: . . . the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (vii, 9, 10). What next follows belongs as truly to the native Hebrew prophecy as to the later apocalypse, being indeed merely the repetition and completion of the prediction already made to Nebuchadnezzar. The kingdom, corresponding to the hard and unfeeling minerals of earth, has been prophesied in austere terms; here, in terms contrasted with the figures of animal ferocity, is prophesied the king. "I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came

[1] See above, p. 291.

[2] See above, p. 279.

with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (vii, 13, 14; cf. ii, 44). Thus the prophecy of the book culminates in the triumph of humanity over brute force and despotism. Nothing that comes after makes a revelation beyond this. "Here," as the writer says, "is the end of the matter" (vii, 28).

NOTE. This dream of Daniel's in chapter vii is dated "in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon"; but as in the author's incorrect view Belshazzar was deemed the son of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. v, 18), the year after the first great monarch's death may be intended, the year in which King Jehoiachin was released from prison (cf. 2 Kings xxv, 27). I have connected this dream with the first part of the book, partly because of its essential parity with Nebuchadnezzar's dream of chapter ii, and partly because in the original this chapter continues the Aramaic, the language of the previous chapters, in which is embodied what I deem the folk source.

Here then was essential Hebrew prophecy bearing noble witness at the capital of the world, before a monarch of alien religion and ideals, and in the idiom of his own dreams. We can feel its fitness to audience and occasion. It would not have done here to speak of Israel's dynastic hopes, with a Davidic king at that moment in a Babylonian prison; nor would this world conqueror have been likely to understand such a prediction except in terms of havoc and conquest. The dream of the coming king does not come until Nebuchadnezzar is dead and Jehoiachin is released from prison. None the less, however, this, the most distinctively Messianic vision of the Book of Daniel, is charged with the refined Hebrew spirit and reflects the prophetic situation of the time. It is of the same strain, indeed, that

the Hebrew prophets of this very exile period are expressing, in more domestic terms, of their idealized king, David, and his restored reign (cf. Jer. xxiii, 5–8; xxx, 9; Isa. lv, 3, 4; Ezek. xxxiv, 23, 24; xxxvii, 24, 25; Hos. iii, 5).

The Enigma of the Later Revelations

Up to the end of chapter vi — that is, of the narrative section — the Book of Daniel maintains not unaptly the atmosphere and verisimilitude of the Chaldean court during the exile period. Then follows a series of prophetic disclosures, four in all, dated, after the manner of Ezekiel,[1] at various times from the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon to the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (see vii, 1; viii, 1; ix, 1; x, 1), and made partly through vision and symbol revealed to Daniel, partly through literal interpretation and prediction by angelic communication. Ever since their publication these disclosures — if their puzzling character will permit the term — have had an extraordinary fascination, owing doubtless to their apocalyptic vista with its mystic computations of times and epochs, for a certain class of minds, students whose literary interest is in cryptic undercurrents of thought and emblem and in vague and occult outlooks. The chapters have evoked a whole species of apocalyptic and eschatological literature, the most notable product being the New Testament Revelation of St. John. They have been a feeding-ground for ill-balanced speculation in all ages and all outstanding crises of history; even the present world war is by no means exempt.[2] A bafflement to moderns, they were doubtless plain enough to the generation for whom they were written; their enigmatic character, indeed, comes largely from their restriction to an episode of history. What transcends this Maccabean episode — namely, the broad prophetic strain — is not perplexing.

Let us consider how this is, and what values remain — apocalyptic and other.

[1] See above, p. 260.

[2] Written in 1916.

The first of these disclosures (vii), a dream of Daniel's reported in the Aramaic, has already been described as a kind of transition, repeating under the figure of beasts the theme of Nebuchadnezzar's initial dream of the four doomed monarchies (ii), and culminating it in the victorious coming of "one like unto a son of man," whose kingdom would be universal and eternal (vii, 13, 14). This event, the most far-reaching revelation of the book, coincides with a sublime world judgment on the fiercest and loudest of the beasts (vii, 9–12); after which "the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (vii, 27). Here would seem to be a more scenic portrayal of the vision that Joel saw so many years before (Joel iii, 12–17), now magnified from the Jewish to the world scale. It is of this outcome that the author, rounding off the Aramaic portion of the text, says, "Here is the end of the matter."

The end indeed; but this presage, as indeed apocalyptic premonition in general, is a foreshortened prophecy. It deals in comprehensive terms with a

> far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves,

without heeding the intermediate steps and stages that must be surmounted on the way to it, or the checks and evils that make against it. And to the author of Daniel, fallen on grievous days, these latter are so stern and formidable that they obscure the view of the end and endanger his people's faith. In other words, a sharp crisis has come upon the time, which seems to block all progress toward the divine advent; a crisis which his nation must if possible be strengthened to withstand and weather. What this is, the increasing definiteness of the disclosures from viii to xi, and especially the minute detail of the latter chapter,

enables us to determine. It is the presumptuous and fanatical attempt of King Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) in his reign (175–164 B.C.) to extirpate the Jewish religion and enforce Hellenic culture, — an attempt which was carried to such lengths as to abolish the Temple service of sacrifice and set up a heathen altar in the sanctuary ("the abomination that maketh desolate," xi, 31).

This predicted crisis is represented as revealed to Daniel in Babylon and Susa by visions and angelic communications. The series of disclosures that lead up to it (viii to xii), taking its objective from the "little horn" of Daniel's dream (vii, 8), identifies this grotesque object in succeeding descriptions as "a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences" (viii, 23), and in the more circumstantial account of his career (xi) as "the king of the north," that is, of Syria. Through the intervening period from Daniel to this king the revelations are made in trance imagery, in which the successive kingdoms are still represented by beasts (cf. viii, 19–22). Following on this, and given in answer to prayer, is a computation of the time that shall elapse from Daniel to the profanation of the Temple (ix, 24–27); which computation ("seventy weeks," that is, perhaps of years = 490 years) takes as a kind of suggestive unit the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah as the duration of the captivity (ix, 2; cf. Jer. xxv, 11, 12; xxix, 10) and extends its meaning. This computation, which, as Professor Driver says, "admits of no explanation, consistent with history, whatever," constitutes, perhaps more than anything else, the enigma of these later revelations, and has accordingly given rise to endless amounts of assumption and guessing.[1] In the rest of the

[1] "Probably no passage of the Old Testament has been the subject of so much discussion, or has given rise to so many and such varied interpretations, as this." — Driver, "The Book of Daniel: with Introduction and Notes," p. 143

book, chapters x to xii, symbolism is discontinued, and the cryptic and mystic language suitable to history in the guise of prediction takes its place. This literal portion follows history more circumstantially than any other part of the book, until the events of about 166 B.C., after which, instead of giving to the victories of Judas Maccabeus the credit they deserve (cf. xi, 34), its predictions of Antiochus's later career and death are vaguer and less verifiable. This fact seems significant for the time when the Book of Daniel was composed.

The period of affliction culminates and passes, however, and the foreshortened prophecy of the end, which was broached as a judgment and a kingdom (vii, 9–14), is resumed and completed in terms of personal deliverance and resurrection and blessedness (xii, 1–3). Daniel himself, the old-time worthy from whose day the legends and premonitions have come, does not fully understand the meaning of his own visions (xii, 4, 9); "but they that are wise shall understand" (xii, 10).

Our examination of the Book of Daniel has carried us far beyond the period of the Chaldean exile, into an entirely new range and atmosphere of the Biblical literature. We must return now to take up other works of that earlier age tracing to contemporaries of the Daniel of history.

III

Second Isaiah: Finisher of the Vision. No attentive reader of the Book of Isaiah can pass from the thirty-ninth chapter — or even the thirty-fifth where the prophetic strain is interrupted by four chapters of narrative — to the fortieth, without being at once aware of an entire change of scene and tone. It is like suddenly emerging from suspense and dimness into a larger and brighter world. The scene, which

hitherto has been localized to one land's affairs, has become as wide as heaven; and in the sight of God, Who sits throned above the circle of the earth, all the nations are pictured as nothing and the inhabitants as grasshoppers (xl, 17, 22). The time, though not specified, is certainly not that of Isaiah the son of Amoz. It reveals an entirely different set of conditions. There is no trace of such struggle with Assyrian peril or diplomatic fatuity or debasing social tendencies as plagued that prophet all his life. The tone of discourse has changed from austere warning and censure to a fervid strain of encouragement and hope, which for the most part continues through the rest of the book. This whole fortieth chapter reads like the introduction to a new book of prophecy. Its opening words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God," strike the keynote. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins" (xl, 1, 2).

It is on account of this remarkable transition in chapters xl to lxvi that modern scholars have deemed them the work of a later author, unnamed, whose prophecy has become united with that of the great prophet of Hezekiah's time, and whom accordingly they distinguish as the Second Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah.[1] This verdict of scholarship, assigning the Book of Isaiah to at least two prophets,[2] opens the question of their relation to each other; to which question a variety of answers has been given, according to the critics' sense of their vital or merely mechanical connection. I have already recorded my view that "the Second Isaiah . . . is an organic sequel and supplement to the First," and that accordingly "the two parts, while set in a different scene

[1] As already noted, p. 167.

[2] A third, or Trito-Isaiah, has by some critics been assumed for chapters lvi–lxvi; the warrant for this, however, does not seem to me sufficient.

and subtending two widely sundered epochs of time, are in reality one book, with one homogeneous scheme of thought, and with a clear coördination and consecution of elements." [1]

NOTE. The consideration of the First Isaiah in connection with the events of his time has necessitated a division in our study of the book; and this has been in some ways a disadvantage, as it has tended to impair the sense of its unitary trend. The reader should here review the sections on "Isaiah of Jerusalem," pp. 167–178, on "The Crisis Met and Weathered," pp. 179–185, and on "Isaiah's Vision of Destiny," pp. 189–194. Attention is called also (p. 192) to the condensed scheme of the book, with its suggested five divisions, or "acts," of which three have been considered. The parts yet to come before us are:

INTERMEZZO AND SHIFT OF SCENE, xl

ACT IV. The second onset: the Chaldean experience, xli–lv.
ACT V. Clearing the way for a new universe, lvi–lxvi.

Why a Second Isaiah

As noted above,[2] the Book of Isaiah, by a title which doubtless was given late, is called "The Vision of Isaiah the Son of Amoz." A vision — but one of unique character; not like the mystic second-sight of Ezekiel or the fantastic dreams of the Book of Daniel. It is lucid and literal. Except for the initial experience of the touching of the prophet's lips (vi, 7), it contains no hint of trance or occult illumination. Rather it is like the rational insight of a statesman and sage, who has an intuitive sense of spiritual forces and tendencies both in his nation and in the world at large, who thinks deeply and feels intensely, and whose faith in the divine will and word is absolute. In a word, it is the vision which comes of sound spiritual illumination.

Of this vision we have already considered, as compared with the presage of other prophets, its broadened horizon and its higher plane[3] — qualities which belong equally to all parts of the book, giving it unity of tissue. It remains

[1] See above, pp. 167, 168. [2] See above, pp. 168, 189.
[3] See above, pp. 190, 192.

to note the large tract of time over which its compass extends. It covers virtually the whole range of Israel's prophetic movement, from the early menace of disaster and captivity before the fall of the northern kingdom to the opening era of adjustment and settledness after the return from Chaldean exile — a span of two centuries.[1] Thus the meaning of the whole field of literary prophecy lies, as it were, mapped out before us.

A vision has a point or points of view, as well in current movements and conditions as in space and time. This is what necessitates the assumption of a Second Isaiah. There are two widely separated epochs of history, focal points we may call them, from which the book's vision opens out. These are the epochs connected with the greatest achievements of two world conquerors, Sennacherib and Cyrus, and with the relation of Israel to the two great empires of Assyria and Babylonia, as these were at the proudest stage of their history.

When the career of Isaiah the son of Amoz ended, the vision, though nobly begun, was only half told. Its stage of stress and dimness ended with the miraculous rescue of Jerusalem from the Assyrian peril (701 B.C.).[2] This event, however, far from being a finality, was only the occasion of a new birth — the birth, effected not without uncertain travail, of that vital and redeeming faith for which the prophet had labored (cf. xxvi, 17, 18; xxxvii, 3; lxvi, 7-9). The spiritual awakening thus symbolized was the earnest, the guaranty, of the redemption to come. And here the First Isaiah, whose fervid utterances are the soul of the vision, had to lay down his work.

For the second stage of the vision, therefore, its stage of triumph and completion, modern criticism recognizes a prophet otherwise unknown who, living near the close of

[1] For an outline of this period see above, pp. 133–137.

[2] See above, pp. 184, 185.

the Chaldean exile, supplemented the earlier work, writing just as Cyrus the Persian was well embarked on the career of conquest in which he became master of Babylon and released the Jewish captives to their ancestral home. The occasion was ripe. The people, purified by their ordeal of captivity and suffering, were at last ready to be called from their long sequestration and girded for their unique mission (cf. xl, 27–31). Great events were casting their shadows before — signs of terror to the nations, of promise and opportunity to the people of Jehovah. So this prophet, called for distinction the Second Isaiah, by a masterful interpretation of these momentous signs and of the agencies by which Jehovah's great purpose was to be wrought, finished the vision begun so long before.

Continuity with the First Isaiah

Of the period of spiritual childhood and youth which succeeded to the new birth in Israel — in other words, the educative century that intervened between the campaigns of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar — the Second Isaiah had no occasion to write. He could take the meaning of it for granted, being concerned rather with the future that was opening so brightly before the now adult and redeemed Israel. This accounts for the gap of a century and a half that is to be understood between the thirty-ninth and the fortieth chapters and for the abrupt change in scene and situation of the chapters succeeding. It is as if the later writer could ignore the annals of this period, as well known, or as not belonging to his dramatic purpose.

NOTE. This gap is bridged by the history and literature that we have from other sources. It is the literary product of this intercalary period that we have considered, with glances at its historic setting, in Chapter V ("After the Reprieve") and, for the early years of the exile, in our study of the Book of Ezekiel. The conditions recognized in the Book of Daniel were for the most part those of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, which ended a little more than a decade before the Second Isaiah began his message.

When as supplementer he set himself to complete the prophetic vision his work was, in the historic sense, the sequel of the whole body of pre-exilic prophecy, which as we have seen was considerable. As a literary product, however, it is only with the First Isaiah that his work may be regarded as continuous; and indeed its continuity therewith, as seems to me, is very marked and palpable. It is the continuity of fitting a time of solution to a time of waiting and stress. It moves in the atmosphere of light and realization, as the earlier prophecy moved through dimness and difficulty. To set forth this contrasted situation, however, it employs the same scheme of ideas and imagery, traverses as it were the same spiritual table-land, as did the earlier utterance. Like the First Isaiah, the Second adopts as the distinctive title of Jehovah, "the Holy One of Israel." Like him he too is dealing not so much with the nation at large, with its political and worldly interests, as with the inner and vital nucleus, that nobler heart of Israel recognized in prophetic idiom as "Zion," or "the daughter of Zion."[1] His opening call to his messenger is, "O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion" (xl, 9; cf. xli, 27). At the outset of the Book of Isaiah the daughter of Zion (quite distinct from the "daughters of Zion," iii, 16, 17; iv, 4) was figured as lonely and forlorn in a land given over to ravage and ruin (i, 8), whose citadel was threatened by a ruthless invader (x, 32; cf. for a later invader, Jer. vi, 23); as a marriageable maiden, however, whose destiny it was to bring forth the Immanuel child who would be mighty against the material and destructive forces of the world[2] (vii, 14; viii, 9, 10). In the latter part of the book, though captive, she is addressed as ready to shake off her bonds and reign (lii, 1, 2), to receive the reward of salvation

[1] Cf. above, pp. 163, 175. These designations, especially the first, are virtually peculiar to the two Isaiahs, occurring but sparingly elsewhere.

[2] See above, p. 176.

(lxii, 11, 12), and under a new name to be remarried to her land (lxii, 1–5 ; cf. liv, 5, 6).

We have seen with what symbolic undertone of imagery this nucleal germ of Israel's character, this redeeming element, is traced by the First Isaiah from a predicted and announced birth (vii, 14 ; ix, 6, 7) through a predicted Messianic youth (xi, 1–5) to an eventual Messianic realm (xxxii, 1–8), wherein king, princes, and subjects shall be at one in a mutual and self-directive government.[1] It is a development which, permeating like leaven from heart to heart, must take time and searching discipline to ripen from the individual to the national scale ; and Isaiah the son of Amoz had to lay down his vision with the general spiritual quickening only just begun.[2] It is at this point that the curtain falls between the two parts of the Book of Isaiah. What stage of realization this Messianic development has reached by the time of the Second Isaiah will come up for later consideration. In its more literal and present relation this nucleal redeeming power in Israel was lodged by the First Isaiah with a remnant, very small and feeble in the midst of rank wickedness (i, 9), an element whose survival and prosperity were put in a term of double meaning, — as an eventual return from captivity, as also a spiritual conversion from virtual heathenism to a living faith in Jehovah (cf. i, 26, 27). Isaiah's whole prophetic conviction, symbolized in the name he gave to his eldest son, was committed to the proposition, "A remnant shall return" (Shear-jashub, vii, 3) ; and the redemption itself is put in terms of justice and righteousness (i, 27) vitalized into faith (xxviii, 16, 17). In the Second Isaiah this element has ceased, except by retrospect, to figure as a remnant (cf. xlvi, 3), because in fact the ruling sentiment, enlightened and seasoned by discipline, so coincides with that formerly attributed to the remnant that they may be addressed in its

[1] See above, pp. 177, 178. [2] See above, pp. 183, 184.

terms as a whole; while redemption, now that Zion's "warfare is accomplished" (xl, 2), is announced and reiterated as an accomplished fact (xliii, 1; xliv, 22, 23; xlviii, 20).

One more feature of continuity may be noted. The First Isaiah's most discouraging experience, from the moment of his call, was with a people spiritually torpid; his hardest literary task, calling forth his greatest gifts of expression, to create in materialized minds a response of spiritual discernment and wakefulness. He put this in terms of seeing and hearing and intelligent attention (vi, 9, 10; xxix, 9–12), and the condition he met was touched upon as late as the time of Ezekiel (Ezek. xii, 2). In the Second Isaiah the people are no longer torpid; they are ready to come forth from their spiritual bondage (cf. xlii, 22), and the prophet can say to them, "Hear ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see" (xlii, 18); "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears" (xliii, 8). They have reached the point where their spiritual intuitions may be appealed to as awake and alert. "Who is there among you," inquires the prophet, "that will give ear to this? that will hearken and hear for the time to come?" (xlii, 23.) It was "the time to come," with its duties and destinies, that was now at stake; and for the first time in the essentially continuous Vision it looked as if, in preparation for this, the predictions uttered in xxix, 18, and xxxv, 5, were ready to come true.

Other such tokens of continuity might be noted; these are sufficient to show how truly the two parts of the Book of Isaiah answer to each other.

It will contribute much to our appreciation of the Second Isaiah if we realize what was the prophet's mood, how he felt about his message and its tremendous meanings. To an extraordinary degree, as we cannot but note, his utterance is charged with feeling; moves, so to say, under high

emotional pressure. The most salient quality of all, perhaps, is enthusiasm, exultation, like the enthusiasm of a great discovery. Some event has occurred, some situation opened, some light dawned on the mystery of God's will and purpose, which all at once has cleared the air and raised a veritable tumult of lively realization in the prophet's mind. The sense of this, with his immediate impulse to announce and explain, gives a kind of headlong quality to his utterance, as if he could not stay to reduce it to calm logical sequence but must respond to the successive surges of vision and wonder as they rise. The plan, accordingly, is hard to analyze to ordered sequence; it is, however, all the more luminous to those who share in his emotion and its grounds.

The Prophet's Emotional Impulse to Expression

Mingled with this dominant strain of enthusiasm are other emotional elements, very natural and human, which serve to bring the prophet's personality nearer to us. In the prevalent confusion and dismay which impending events are beginning to cause, he does not repress a certain natural pride of superior insight, which leads him to challenge the like in all comers (xli, 1, 21–24) and to exult in being the first bearer of good tidings (xli, 26, 27; xlviii, 3–8). The reverse of this mood, too, is equally to be noted: a caustic disdain, not to say contempt, for the spiritual density of the splendid heathenism around him (xli, 28, 29; xliv, 9–11; xlv, 20), which disdain vents itself in biting satire on images and image-making (xl, 18–20; xliv, 12–20) and on the elaborate inanities of Chaldean divination (xlvii, 12–15). Withal, when a certain object which we shall later note calls forth his compassion and sympathy, he is not untouched by a poignant sense of compunction and tender regret (cf. xlii, 19, 20; lii, 14; liii, 3, 6). All these emotional moods, however, are but varied pulsations in his well-nigh overwhelming sense of the vastness and depth of his prophetic theme. He feels

himself the spokesman of "the everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth" (xl, 28; cf. xlii, 5; xlv, 18), who sits throned above the puny race of man (xl, 21–23), and whose word, once spoken, shall stand forever (xl, 8). He hears the call to open a way for Jehovah through the wastes of humanity, not only to Israel's deliverance from captivity (that as a kind of by-product, xlv, 13) but to the uplift of civilization (xlv, 1–7), to a universal régime of salvation (xlix, 6; xlv, 22, 23), and so on and on, to the finished consummation of new heavens and a new earth (lxv, 17). So great a theme has not been sung before. The data for it have been gathering head, but conditions were not ready until now. It detaches itself from the provincial affairs of a single people or a temporary crisis. It does not localize itself clearly to place, whether Chaldea or Jerusalem, nor does it set times and seasons. It is in fact the sublime culmination of Old Testament prophecy. What comes after in this strain is only prophecy's gradual subsidence. And it is the prophet's impassioned impulse to set his message forth as good news, "good tidings to Zion," that has earned for him the title generally accorded to him, of "the evangelical prophet."

NOTE. The phrase "to bring good tidings," which is the keynote of the Second Isaiah (see xl, 9; xli, 27; lii, 7; lxi, 1), is translated in Greek by εὐαγγελίσασθαι, which is the origin of our word "to evangelize." The term was adopted from Second Isaiah by the New Testament writers and applied to the proclamation of the things of Christ (cf. Luke i, 19; ii, 10; viii, 1; Rom. x, 15). The noun εὐαγγέλιον, "evangel," is in very frequent New Testament usage to designate the tidings of Christ; and the English translation *Gospel*—"good spell," or "good news"—is its exact equivalent. It is thus the Second Isaiah (though he may have adopted it from the earlier prophet Nahum, Nah. i, 15) who originates the term for the distinctive New Testament body of truth.

What is it that has called forth this enthusiasm, this lively sense of pardon and fulfillment, on the prophet's part? The impassioned surge of his announcement blends the

details of his good news together, but a little straight attention resolves his discourse into three main lines of theme.

1. The Liberator on his Way

First, to them "that wait for Jehovah" (cf. xl, 31), he announces and explains the approach of the liberator. This announcement follows immediately after the fortieth chapter, in which, as we have noted, he makes his change of scene and introduces, as it were, his dramatis personæ. He calls the outlying lands (of course it is Jehovah who speaks) to a solemn conference (xli, 1), to tell them what is taking place by Jehovah's express purpose and appointment. "Who hath raised up one from the east," he exclaims, "whom He calleth in righteousness to his foot? . . . I, Jehovah, the first, and with the last, I am he" (xli. 2, 4). This personage, not named until the third mention of him, is first described as a resistless conqueror (xli, 2, 3), then as one "that calleth upon my name" (xli, 25), and finally, after his name is given, as Jehovah's "shepherd" (xliv, 28), "anointed" (xlv, 1), and "he whom Jehovah loveth" (xlviii, 14). He is one of the acknowledged great ones of antiquity, Cyrus, conqueror of Babylon and founder of the Medo-Persian empire; whose mission it is, in the large, to introduce a more liberal order of things (cf. xlv, 1–7) and, as related to Israel, to release the exiles to their homes and decree the rebuilding of Jerusalem (xliv, 28; xlv. 13). With his approach, so ordained and facilitated by Jehovah, the prophet has the sense of a world-wide divine event. He has heard "the voice of one that crieth, 'Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah'" (xl, 3–5), — a wilderness far vaster than the Syrian desert through which the captives are to return (cf. xliii, 19–21), the straightened and leveled way of which is for Cyrus as well as for Israel (xlv, 2, 13; xlviii, 15). In other words, the prophet's presage is of a better civilization as well as of a holier religion, of a freer access for all the world to the truth and health of life (xlv, 22, 23).

NOTE. With the coming of Cyrus, who was of Aryan race, to world dominion, the helm of empire passed from Semitic hands to Aryan, and in subsequent dynasties, through the Greeks and Romans, was perpetuated in the same race. For a comparison of the Aryan genius for mental and political achievements with the Semitic genius for moral and spiritual ideas, see the remarks quoted from Professor McCurdy, page 35, note.

The prophet's description of Cyrus's mission was doubtless made comparatively early in the latter's career of conquest, some time before he drew near to Babylon. As the conqueror advances on his way the prophet draws a realistic picture of the dismay caused in province after province at his approach, and the fatuous efforts of the inhabitants to save themselves by repairing their idols (xli, 5–7). These idols, indeed, of which the lands are full, never fail to call out his keen satire; though his contempt is not so much for them as for the besotted minds of men who can make them with their own hands and then worship them as if they could avail anything (xl, 18–20; xliv, 12–20). He does not spare even the most distinguished of the Chaldean deities (xlvi, 1, 2) nor the occult learning and culture which is the pride of this highly civilized land (xlvii, 12–15). His disdain, in fact, is for the muddy mind that has been molded by idol service (xli, 29; xliv, 9; xlv, 20). Over against such a mind, which has no insight, he sets the mind molded to the mind of Jehovah; which indeed he feels his own to be, — glorying, not without a certain egotistic pride, in being the first to interpret the signs of the times (xli, 26–28), and challenging his heathen neighbors to show a like discernment, whether of good or evil (xli, 21–24). This personal touch — with which he connects his sarcastic onslaught on heathen culture (cf. xli, 28, 29) — is eminently human and natural. It is, as we have noted, a kind of overflow of his prophetic enthusiasm, as the tremendous meanings of coming events crowd upon his consciousness.

2. The Call to be Witnesses

The event which is causing such dismay to the outlying nations, however, and such dull confusion to idol-besotted minds has no essential terrors for the exiled people of Israel. Rather, it is their long purposed and ripened opportunity. When, in his opening chapter, he first looks in upon them, he sees them sequestered, unheeded, deeming themselves forgotten of Jehovah (xl, 27). But no, he says, it is not in Him who numbers the stars to faint from his purpose, or to fail those who have waited for Him (xl, 26–31). Their true mission is before them. "They that wait for Jehovah," he says, "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." He is calling to duty a people grown to new life and vigor—a great contrast to the froward nation with whom the First Isaiah labored.

Then, when he has broached the call and function of the coming conqueror and satirized the scurrying alarm caused among the other nations (xli, 1–7), he turns to his people to announce the part that Israel is to play as a factor in the great world movement. Addressing them in the singular, as a unit, with endearing names that go back to their very beginnings (xli, 8, 9), he speaks hope and courage to them: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (vs. 10). The ultimate function that he ascribes to them, though an astonishing one, is in the straight line of what has been prophesied before. "Behold," he reports Jehovah's words, "I have made thee to be a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in Jehovah, thou shalt glory in the

Holy One of Israel" (vss. 15, 16). This refers to an elemental sifting and separating process which from the beginning of the movement had been before the eyes of prophecy. A century and a half before, Micah, foreseeing this day (cf. Mic. iv, 10), had said, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion" (Mic. iv, 13); not much later Isaiah had exclaimed of Babylon, "O thou my threshing, and the grain of my floor! That which I have heard from Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you" (Isa. xxi, 10); and Jeremiah, prophesying a similar destructive mission for Israel (Jer. li, 20–24), had made Babylon "like a threshing-floor at the time when it is trodden" (Jer. li, 33). These prophecies can refer of course only to a far-reaching spiritual action which the image of threshing and winnowing fitly typifies; their implication is not political or militaristic but elemental.

When, however, the prophet's description comes to what the people of Israel are specifically to do or be in bringing about this tremendous result, his trenchant metaphors yield place to literal terms of quite other implication. He summons them to be true to their superior enlightenment as Jehovah's witnesses (xliii, 8–13); in other words, to stand as discerners of His truth and representatives of His redeeming and saving power. To this end it is that, having overcome the assaults and allurements of heathenism, they are facing this world crisis of the coming of Cyrus. Having their part in the movement, they have nothing to fear. They, who alone of all the nations can be addressed as "the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears" (xliii, 8), are called from their durance (cf. xlii, 22) to be, in a profound sense, the conscience, the moral dynamic, of the coming world.[1] Witnesses of other gods and cults, too, are challenged to show a similar insight; but none can interpret past or future, or fathom the reality of

[1] Cf. above, p. 137.

things (xli, 28; xliii, 9; xliv, 9). This situation it is which, making the prophet so enthusiastic over the light vouchsafed to Israel, rouses such disdain of the elaborate but futile learning of Babylon (xliv, 25; xlviii, 12–15) and the muddled mind of the idol devotee (xlvi, 20).

Such, then, is the mission of Israel as a community of men consciously redeemed and enlightened, — a community by whose character the world may identify the will and word of Jehovah. An essential condition of this mission is liberation from Chaldean bondage and home reconstruction; and for this, in its material and political sense, Cyrus is the divinely ordained factor.

It is not the material and political sense, however, that the prophet has first in mind. Their liberation, and by consequence their witnessing, is spiritual. Cyrus's clemency is its sign, but its essence is of their own redemption and free will. This is connoted, I think, in the prophet's twice-uttered exhortation to his people to "go forth" from Babylon (xlviii, 20–22; lii, 11, 12). To two classes of people he urges this exhortation, classes whom perhaps we may roughly distinguish as the more worldly minded and the more spiritually minded. It is not until chapter xlviii that he differentiates, and then he addresses himself to "the house of Jacob, . . . who swear by the name of Jehovah, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness." These he admonishes as men who, availing themselves of the Jehovah name and distinction, are not fully refined of false alloy (xlviii, 10) and so have not won to the peace of the Hebrew hope (vss. 17–19). To them, as to the faithful, the opportunity is open to go forth from Chaldean corruptions into the purer satisfactions of life; but coupled with this exhortation is the austere warning, "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked" (xlviii, 20–22; cf. lvii, 21; Jer. li, 6). Quite different is the tone of his exhortation to the distinctive Israel of the

redemption (perhaps identical with the First Isaiah's "remnant" who would return). They are to depart in clean and seemly order, bearing the vessels of Jehovah, and with the calm deliberateness of inherent freedom and courage (lii, 11, 12). With these, and not with the double-minded, is the witnessing that issues in freedom and peace.

When through his prophet spokesman Jehovah first calls the captive people of Israel to be a factor in his world campaign, his designation of them is, "my servant," — a title of trust and responsibility repeated many times and with marked emphasis (xli, 8, 9; xlii, 19; xliii, 10; xliv, 1, 2, 21). Evidently meant to be a term of unique distinction, it always names the people in the singular number, seeming thus to connote their solidarity as one common will called to administer the purpose of Jehovah. Israel as a community made fit by experience is the servant of Jehovah, the agency of His world design. To this end the community is repeatedly reminded of the redemption and forgiveness to which it has won (cf. xliv, 21–23), and encouraged to "fear not"; as if it were to commit itself intrepidly to some new and untried adventure in life and to hazard victory thereby.

3. "Behold my Servant whom I Uphold"

But what is this adventure? The Servant of Jehovah — what is the specific nature and method of his service?

The passages wherein Israel as a nation or community is directly addressed do not answer this question very clearly. They are full of enthusiasm and assurance, but they do not reduce the adventure to definite action: For this we must look to another class of passages — a notable series wherein the Servant is described in the third person, or wherein he speaks for himself. In these he appears as a personage, with traits and experiences not communal but individual. Described — or describing himself — as one known to all without being named, he is so presented that these distinctive traits and experiences are brought to light for Israel to

cherish or pity or emulate. It is as if this person, whoever he is, were introduced as the living embodiment, if they will receive it so, of the people's highest and deepest service, standing thus as their supreme type and representative before Jehovah and the world. So in an ideal solidarity of community and person, both are alike called the Servant of Jehovah.

NOTE. *The Recognition of the Servant.* It will help to a clearer identification of this Servant of Jehovah if we take care to distinguish the traits that are brought to light according as he is spoken to, spoken of, or himself speaks. They come out so distinctively that we cannot regard this grammatical alternation of first, second, and third persons as fortuitous.

1. When spoken to, as he is in the first instance (xli, 8), the Servant is identified with the Israelite community; is bidden not to fear the onslaughts of conquerors or the upheavals of history, because the people itself has a conquering mission, as a divinely created instrument to thresh and winnow the world (xli, 14–16). Again he is identified with the people of Israel as Jehovah's one true and enlightened witness in the midst of idol cults (xliii, 10); and later he is addressed as a nation formed from the womb for the light and leading of the nations (xliv, 1–5). This communal function is epitomized in xliv, 21–23.

2. It is when the Servant is spoken of that the most mysterious traits of his character are given; as if Jehovah were describing one who only dimly realized how much his personality and mission meant. First he appears as the patient, unobtrusive, sympathetic, persistent one who is destined to make justice and spiritual emancipation prevail (xlii, 1–9); then as one blind and deaf, as if just emerging from gloom to a dazzling light (xlii, 19–21), in which description "the blind people that have eyes and the deaf that have ears" also are summoned to their mission (xliii, 8–13). Next he is described as one whose visage was marred by suffering and who was destined to startle nations as he had astonished men (lii, 13–15); and finally, as one who, though despised and rejected, gave his life to save others, and in patient silence bore their sins and made intercession (liii, 12). Yet in that sacrifice lies his victory (liii, 11, 12).

3. In three passages the Servant of Jehovah speaks for himself. First, in a solemn proclamation he accepts the mission to which he was born (xlix, 1–7); but instead of conceiving his function as that of a threshing instrument (cf. xli, 15) he identifies himself with Israel (vs. 3) as a finely tempered weapon for Jehovah's service (vs. 2; cf. xi, 4), and

recognizes that his mission is not merely to restore "the preserved of Israel" but to give light and salvation to the whole world (vs. 6). Second, he represents himself as one scholarly and eloquent, who for the sake of his beneficent work submits to shame and indignity yet holds himself firmly and confidently to his purpose (l, 4–9), and calls for emulators of the same faith and zeal (vss. 10, 11). Finally, he defines as his own aim (not separable from that of his people), that for which he was anointed, the ideal character and mission first laid down for the Servant of Jehovah (lxi, 1–3; cf. xlii, 5–9). It is this last noted mission that Jesus takes up and appropriates as his own in the synagogue at Nazareth, his home town (Luke iv, 16–21).

Thus the prophet bids his people contemplate one in whom the highest ideals of personality are portrayed, as embodied or at least adumbrated in the idealized experience of Israel. And the prophecy is that this type of personal worth, even by its gentleness and sympathy and self-effacement, is destined to prevail. An estranging, almost incredible ideal for its pre-Christian time (cf. liii, 1), yet it is one which in the New Testament era became real and normal. It is the idealized portrayal of the Messianic personality, human yet imbued with the divine spirit, which is the redeeming health and adultness of manhood.

The Personal Original

For this masterly portrayal we owe much to the prophet's creative sense, but not all. It does not read like a pure invention or abstraction; it calls its readers to behold an individualized character. And yet what personal model can history furnish to answer to it?

The developed Christian thought has so identified this portrayal, especially in the fifty-third chapter, with the person of Jesus Christ (cf., for example, Acts viii, 30–35), whose earthly ministry came more than five and a half centuries later, that Biblical students are disposed either to ignore the question whether such a personage ever existed, or to merge the qualities here given in those of the idealized community of Israel. This rather arbitrary judgment, however, leaves too much of the problem unsolved.

One person there was, qualified by dignity and station, to merit the title "Servant" in common with the people of Israel. That person was their king. We will remember that when in 597 B.C. the flower of the Jewish court and realm was surrendered into captivity (2 Kings xxiv, 12–15), their king Jehoiachin went with them, and for thirty-seven years — equal to a whole generation — was a state prisoner in Babylon, sequestered from his subjects, as they from the affairs of the world. King and people were in like case, though his was much the harder lot. During that time they, so far as government was concerned, were left, except for their enforced exile, to their own way (cf. liii, 6), mindless of him; and he — well, "who shall declare his generation?" We will recall what occurred at the end of that time. He was released from his imprisonment and treated with honor and clemency all the rest of his life. We do not know how long he lived, for there is no record of his death; but if this prophecy of the Second Isaiah was written, as it seems to have been, early in Cyrus's career of conquest, King Jehoiachin, if still living, would be about seventy years old.

NOTE. *The Narrative of Jehoiachin's Release.* "And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; and he spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, and changed his prison garments. And Jehoiachin did eat bread before him continually all the days of his life; and for his allowance there was a continual allowance given him of the king, every day a portion, all the days of his life" (2 Kings xxv, 27–30 = Jer. lii, 31–34).

Many descriptions and allusions throughout the Second Isaiah seem to turn on this strange experience of surrender and imprisonment and release. It is viewed as the wonderful paradox of the captivity. In illustration of this we may

note first what the Servant himself reports from Jehovah as he realizes how tremendous is his mission (xlix, 5–7). "Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: 'Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship; because of Jehovah that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee'" (vs. 7). Thus, with incidental mention of the rejection and ignominy noted later in the prophet's retrospect (liii, 3, 4; cf. Jer. xxii, 28), is given the Servant's personal assurance of the homage, also mentioned later, which will come to him, the wondering sense of a kingliness beyond that of kings, when the motive and meaning of his sufferings become known (lii, 13–15). All this, though highly idealized, seems to recognize an experience similar to, not to say identical with, that of King Jehoiachin.

We have spoken above of the prophet's tone of wondering enthusiasm, like the enthusiasm of a great discovery.[1] We can almost specify the moment when, like a sudden surge of insight, that discovery with its tremendous vista of prophetic vision dawned upon his mind. It was the moment of the king's release, when, dazed and dulled and with visage marred (lii, 14), he came forth from the gloom and silence of his dungeon. To the prophet this was like an unwittingly acted parable, with its direct parallel and appeal to the people. "Hear, ye deaf," he says, "and look, ye blind, that ye may see" (xlii, 18). Then, as if describing the object they are to see, follows this singular passage: "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I send? who is blind as he that is at peace with me,[2] and

[1] See above, p. 308.

[2] In the first edition of his commentary on Isaiah ("The Prophecies of Isaiah," Vol. I, p. 260), without following up its connotation, Professor Cheyne translates this clause, "Who is blind as the surrendered one?" A very significant rendering if the prophet had King Jehoiachin in mind; a very vague and enigmatic one otherwise.

blind as Jehovah's servant? Thou seest many things, but thou observest not; his ears are open, but he heareth not" (vss. 19, 20).[1] This, with the succeeding verse, sounds as if meant for an individual case; but turning then to mention the people at large as in a similar state of spiritual duress (vss. 22–25), and to hearten them with the assurance of redemption (xliii, 1–7), he calls on them to "bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears" (vs. 8), that they in like access of vision may become Jehovah's witnesses, thereby qualifying as His Servant (vs. 10). It is as if the prophet were calling attention to the one singular phenomenon of prison release which contained the most pregnant lesson of their emancipation and mission.

Not the eventual release alone, however, — the long ordeal itself, too, after the Servant "was taken from prison and judgment"[2] (liii, 8), yields rich store of revelations, partly as reported by the prophet, partly as overheard from the Servant himself. The most familiar of these, and for its time the most estranging, is that contained in the fifty-third chapter. Here in a vivid retrospect (cf. lii, 14) the prophet, with pity and compunction, — for he too was at one with the nation in misunderstanding and rejecting (cf. vss. 2, 3), — reflects how all this suffering with its patient silence was undergone as just bearing his people's sins, and that while like sheep they had gone their own willful ways he, led like a lamb to the slaughter, was their unheeded sacrifice. Nor was this in vain, for survival and success are predicted of it. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. . . . Therefore will I divide him

[1] Macaulay, in a remark in his Essay on Milton, has noted a similar phenomenon to this. "When a prisoner first leaves his cell," he writes, "he cannot bear the light of day; he is unable to discriminate colors, or recognize faces."

[2] I quote here the translation of the Authorized Version, as being both more correct and more lucid than that of the Revised.

a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (vss. 11, 12). The long results of that silent expiation will earn the Servant a name among the mighty of the earth, a victory which hitherto the world had only military terms to describe. Such is the prophet's awe-stricken discovery as he reflects on the experience of him whose first emergence from duress so astonished many.

In his report and interpretation of this expiatory ordeal, the prophet has revealed much, but not all. When we note what Jehovah Himself says to the personal Servant, and overhear the latter's response thereto, we get an added idea of the true inwardness of that strange surrender to duress and death. It was not blind, except as faith is blind. It was not weak. It was indeed not surrender at all, except to the ascertained will and word of God. The prison experience, with its cruelties and indignities, was transmuted into a sturdy avowal of loyalty and faith. "I gave my back to the smiters," the Servant says, "and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (l, 6). Yet instead of letting this engender resentment and rancor, he set his face like a flint against the shame (vs. 7) and listened as scholars do for Jehovah's word, that he himself might give comforting words to the weary and oppressed (vss. 4, 5). Of the ultimate rightness of this attitude he is so sure that he challenges any to gainsay him (vss. 8–10). This corresponds remarkably with Jehovah's first characterization of "my Servant whom I uphold" (xlii, 1–4) and with the commission that was then laid upon the latter: "I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles," — to which commission were added these remarkable words: "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoner from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house" (vss. 6, 7). The Servant himself

recalls this latter feature of his commission in his large realization of it (xlix, 9); and later, in his summary of what he is anointed to do, a prominent element is "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (lxi, 1–3). All this is, to say the least, full of suggestion. The insistent reference to prison and release seems to recognize an individual experience which of course can be attributed to only one person, the royal prisoner Jehoiachin. Whether it is he whom the prophet has idealized into the personal Servant of Jehovah and thereby made the pattern and type of the communal Servant is left for the candid student to judge for himself. I have given the data.

In thus portraying the fortunes of this mysterious Servant the prophet has done more than rescue a royal personage from despite and rejection. He has rescued the Hebrew history itself. Taking the event which Israel deemed the most calamitous in its annals — namely the seeming ignominious surrender of the king and the flower of his realm to Babylon — he has through the faith of this personage given it motive and power, nay, has revealed it as a tremendous spiritual adventure such as the world had never dreamed of (cf. lii, 15; Hab. i, 5). It is, in truth, a stooping in order to conquer, an integral part of the paradoxical campaign waged by the Spirit of Jehovah. From the very start the king was despised and rejected of men. Even his historians misjudged him, calling his reign — of which the sole event was the surrender — an evil one (2 Kings xxiv, 9 = 2 Chron. xxxvi, 9). His contemporary Jeremiah, who at a later date advised his people to imitate the surrender, was puzzled and doubtful over his exile (Jer. xxii, 28–30). Ezekiel speaks of him tenderly indeed, but only in the vagueness of parable (Ezek. xvii, 22–24). The purpose and power of the surrender, in fact, could come to light only after the release, when the king came forth as from burial

to life. Here come in these wonderful accounts of the Servant, who accepted the leading of the divine Spirit (l, 5), confirmed an inflexible conviction that his course was right (vss. 7–9), and exerted his powers in sympathy and comfort (vs. 4; xlii, 3, 4). He himself was learning to walk by sheer blind faith rather than by sight, — as the prophet puts it, "Who is blind but my servant" (xlii, 18)? And the spirit of this learner and sufferer is commended to the surrendered nation as the pattern and type of its communal mission. Thus a new historic force was introduced to a darkened and brutal civilization, a force greater than man or man-made devices can wield, whose gentle yet mighty working, biding its time of germination and leavening influence, emerged at length full-orbed in the person and ministry of Christ. Here we see it as it were in embryo, in adumbration, discovered and illumined by the rapt insight of an enthusiastic prophet. It is essentially the sense of this gentle yet all-potent Messianic force, which he has felt even in surrender and prison, and of its fitness to become the spiritual dynamic of a redeemed people, which so crowds the prophet's words with the joy of "good tidings to Zion." He has seen it rise in the secluded experience of a kingly personality to steadfast faith and sympathy and helpfulness and sacrifice, and in the spiritual force of that personality he sees the promise and power of salvation for all mankind.

But this spiritual force must have its personal and communal agencies to administer and impart it to the darkened and needy nations of mankind. It cannot be left to the individual goodness and influence of a personage just released from prison, kingly though he is and honored by his captors. That is why the prophet seeks so zealously to induce his people, in a solidarity of faith and loyalty, to make their king's noble aim their own. Only so are they in their turn to be the real Servant of Jehovah, ministering His world

purpose. Accordingly, as soon as he has portrayed the sacrificial devotion of the personal Servant (liii), with a renewed call to faith and courage (liv) he sets before them, as the other prophets of the captivity have done, a new covenant with Jehovah (cf. Jer. xxxi, 31–34; Ezek. xxxvii, 26), connecting it, as did they with David (cf. Jer. xxiii, 5–8; xxx, 9; Ezek. xxxiv, 23, 24; xxxvii, 24). "I will make an everlasting covenant with you," he reports from Jehovah, "even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples" (lv, 3, 4). Thus the prophets of the captivity are in agreement as to the ideal destiny of Israel. There is this momentous advance, however, to be noted of the Second Isaiah, that this Davidic leadership is to be not merely of the Jewish nation but universal (lv, 4; cf. xlix, 6), and it is to be not merely a receiving of light and blessing on their part, as if they could have the monopoly of Jehovah's favor, but a giving out also, an impartation; in other words, they are to be a witnessing and missionary people. "Behold," the prophecy continues, "thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee" (lv, 5). Thus with a glowing rhapsody of privilege and duty and promise, whose main inspiration is the discovery and identification of the Servant of Jehovah, this section of the Book of Isaiah (xl–lv) closes.

With chapter lvi a new section, or "act," opens, the last of the five into which the Book of Isaiah naturally falls; which section I have ventured to entitle "Clearing the Way for a New Universe."[1] That it is a new section is evident from the change of style and subject. From rhapsody and unconditioned promise the transition is abruptly to warning

[1] See above, pp. 192, 302.

and austere counsel. Thus the prophecy goes on for four chapters (lvi–lix) before the strain of encouragement and propitious outlook, on the larger and as it were cosmic scale, is resumed. It is as if the prophet, before he could round out his immense theme, must needs go back and, picking up some essential elements hitherto omitted or ignored, fit them into his comprehensive scope of treatment. Such, to my mind, is in effect the significance of the group of chapters that opens the final section.

Fitting the Word to Israel at Large

To make clear the relation of this part of Isaiah to the rest, let us look a little more closely than we have done into the religious and secular situation of the exiles to whom the prophecy is addressed. It will be remembered that not a little homogeneous group but a whole diversified nation are captive here in Babylon, and that a class of them has already been admonished (xlviii) for their lack of sincerity and integrity.

When in chapter xl the prophet finds Israel a sequestered people deeming themselves forgotten of Jehovah, and encourages them to wait for the sure fulfillment of His word (xl, 27–31), he proceeds to associate the "good tidings" he is bringing them with "Zion" and "Jerusalem" (xl, 9), the sacred spots of the homeland. These are not local terms, however; they are terms used in prophetic phrase to designate that choice element of the nation whose hearts are still in the homeland and whose religious zeal and enthusiasm may be counted on to carry them back when the release comes. These correspond to what the First Isaiah called "the remnant," now grown in numbers and matured faith until the typical Israel can be measured by their spiritual standard. In all the chapters from xl to lv, except xlviii, this type character, the character of a people purged from the virus of idolatry, is taken for granted, and the glowing assurance of forgiveness and redemption and peace is meant for such. But

still the earlier prophecy holds true that it is the remnant that shall return; and the tone of chapter xlviii indicates that a considerable portion of the people does not come up to the pure standard imputed in the body of the prophecy. These must not be left out of the account. Nor must they be segregated as if they were outsiders. The redemption of Israel is not granted as a favoritism. The same freedom of return, of "going forth from Babylon" (xlviii, 20), is held out to them as to others; the same boon of peace; but "there is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked" (vs. 22) is the sternly coupled warning.[1] So the prophet holds the coming high destiny of Israel open to all; for the time is past to differentiate between the "good and bad figs," as did Jeremiah (Jer. xxiv), or between the remnant and the majority, as did the First Isaiah, or between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, as Ezekiel still had to do, though confident of their eventual reunion (Ezek. xxxvii, 15–23). He is not minded to discriminate, though chapter xlviii reveals a class still in need of warning and correction. For all there is a Zion and a holy city to which in spirit they may return. In other words, while the prophet's glowing descriptions of the new order connote an audience in like intense mood, they are meant equally for Israel at large, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear" (cf. Ezek, iii, 11), and whose religious emotions, though perhaps just as genuine, are not pitched in so high a key. It is in this closing section of the book, I think, that the prophet has in mind the needs of this more secular or lay class. Accordingly he leaves rhapsody and writes in the more sober and didactic style. Whether this part of the book was written before the end of the exile or after, and whether in Babylon or in Palestine, does not definitely appear; the only indication of time is the complaint in lxiv, 10, 11 (cf. lxiii, 18, 19), that Jerusalem is still a desolation and the

[1] See above, p. 314.

Temple in ruins. Some critics have conjectured for its authorship a Trito-Isaiah, but, as I think, without sufficient warrant. My impression is that the released king Jehoiachin, standing behind the prophet as a kind of silent partner and still functioning as the anointed king, may have had much to do with the sane and as it were legislative counsels therein given; this seems borne out by the interpolated Servant passage, lxi, 1–3, in which, echoing xlii, 6, 7, the Servant states what he is anointed to do.

The "Israel at large" to whom these chapters are addressed may be regarded as the general lay element of the people wherever they are in the world. The time had come for them to enter upon their destiny as a cosmopolitan people. One sees this from the outcome of the Chaldean exile. As a matter of history the First Isaiah's prophecy that a remnant should return came literally to pass. It was, after all, only a remnant, only a comparatively small minority, that recolonized the land of Palestine. The great majority, having for two generations[1] found homes and interests elsewhere, remained as it were citizens of the world, while still genuine patriots of the typical Zion and Jerusalem (cf. xlviii, 2), — an ideal of loyalty which, in spite of historic vicissitudes, the race has maintained to this day. So from the exile onward the Biblical literature, dealing with Israel at large, must reckon with the Israel of the synagogue as of the Temple, with the Jews of the dispersion and of the capital alike.

"He that taketh refuge in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain. And he will say, 'Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.' For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy:

[1] So reckoned from the prophetic notation of the period as seventy years (see Jer. xxv, 11, 12; Dan. ix, 2), which is put in a round rather than a historic number.

I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite" (lvii, 13–15; cf. lxii, 10). Such may be deemed the keynote of these searching chapters. There are stumbling-blocks to be removed from the character and career of Israel at large: vestiges of an inveterate proclivity to idolatry and servility (lvii, 3–10; lxv, 3–7); tendencies ominous of a hard and heartless disposition (lvi, 9–lvii, 2); which, if not corrected by the tender spirit of humility and sympathy, will work mischief. In his plea for tolerance and welcome toward foreigners (lvi, 1–8) the prophet hints not obscurely at the race pride and exclusiveness which in later times became too strong a trait of the restored nation; his prophetic caution against such narrowness is the opening of Israel's most sacred doors to all: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (lvi, 7). The two forms of religious cultus that he recognizes, namely, observance of the Sabbath (lvi, 2; lviii, 13, 14) and fasting (lviii, 1–9), are merely those to which Israel, deprived of temple, was reduced in exile; and they are interpreted with remarkable inwardness, as embodying all that the true man needs in maintaining spiritual relations with God and fellow man. The spirit of Christianity lies involved in these simple customs, sincerely and unselfishly observed. In sum, these four chapters, lvi to lix, seem to embody the prophet's desire to train Israel's traits and tendencies out of perverseness to that vital redemption and covenant (lix, 20, 21) which shall make them a people not only righteous and conscientious but so gracious and tolerant that their religion shall be an attraction to the nations that need it. He has detected the tendencies to clannishness and race pride, to self-righteousness and exclusiveness, which if not checked will make against this. If they are to be dispersed in the earth, their witnessing for

Traits and Tendencies to be Rectified

Jehovah must be not only an enlightening power, it must also be an art — the art of living with others. To this end the stumbling-blocks must be removed from the way, that their character may be lovable as well as admirable. If in subsequent history the Jewish people have neglected to cultivate the power of being beloved, it is, as these chapters show, not for lack of warning.

The Vision Finished: with Summation and Retrospect

With the sixtieth chapter the prophet's strain of rhapsody and enthusiasm, which the chapters of admonition interrupted, is resumed and kept up in a kind of climax, to the end of the book. But with a difference. The fortieth and succeeding chapters called Israel forth from their long waiting to deliverance and opportunity. The captive people are to learn the way of the Servant of Jehovah, and submit themselves in faith to its gentle and kindly but in the end prevailing influence. It is in effect the beginning of communal life on a new and unheard-of plan, with the assured return to Zion as its guaranty and occasion. In the sixtieth and succeeding chapters we have the thrill and enthusiasm of the grand culmination; wherein at the end of her long ordeal Israel is apostrophized as so established in the restored home, and so truly the light and leading of the world, as to be the center of attraction and reverent joy to all peoples. "For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth," the prophecy begins, "and gross darkness the peoples; but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (lx, 2, 3).

This is not to be read as a Utopian rhapsody, though indeed its outlook goes over from the national to the universal. It is merely the jubilant finish of the vision which was outlined as the theme of the book at the beginning of the First Isaiah (ii, 2, 4; cf. Mic. iv, 1–3), and which, on lines later clarified in Christ and Christianity, is still in

process of coming to pass. We may indeed call it Isaiah's sublime presage of the Christian sway and power in the coming times, as his conception of the Servant of Jehovah is his presage of the personal Christ. The person and the era are correlative. We must, to be sure, say of it as the people said of Ezekiel's presage, "The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of times that are far off" (Ezek. xii, 27); but the elements, the spiritual principles, are all brought to light in the course of the prophecy, and it is evidently the purpose of these ensuing chapters to pass them in summary and review.

Let us briefly run over some of these elements.

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows" (lx, 8)? In such visualizing terms the prophet depicts the eager throngs who will some day press onwards, not only from the dispersed sons of Israel but from the lands of those who despised and wronged them, to a holy central place which, under the name "The city of Jehovah, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (lx, 14), is conceived as at once a sanctuary, a city, and a commonwealth. It is not the place, however, as a civic or religious capital that the prophet has mainly in mind, nor its restored wealth and prosperity; rather it is the regenerated people and the spirit of good will and beneficence that animates them. In other words, he translates the new life of Israel, according to his consistent ideal, into terms not political or commercial but spiritual and essentially Messianic. "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise" (lx, 18). Three chapters (lx–lxii) are devoted to this phase of his subject; in which by various hints of recapitulation he brings previous strains of prophecy to bear. We cannot recount these all here. There is, for instance, the lately broached idea of their making themselves loved. "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man passed through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy

of many generations" (lx, 15). Then the personal Servant of Jehovah speaks once more, in terms that can only be applied to their idealized king, to repeat the charge that Jehovah, by his anointing, has laid upon him to fulfill: preaching good tidings to all who are needy and heavy-laden (lxi, 1–3; cf. xlii, 5–7); the well-known passage which in later days our Lord Jesus took up and applied to his own mission (Luke iv, 17–19). In a following passage, by the bestowal of new names upon people and land, the reproach of adulterous unfaithfulness, which from the time of Hosea and the First Isaiah (cf. i, 21; lvii, 3–10) all the prophets have fastened upon Israel's idolatrous proclivities, is graciously taken away, and the land is recognized as remarried to Jehovah and to her youthful sons (lxii, 4, 5). Once more, too, the prophet exhorts his people, as he has admonished the doubtful ones, to clear the way and gather out the obstructions, that the salvation of the holy people may have free course (lxii, 10–12); an exhortation which, by its charge to "lift the ensign for the peoples," puts upon the people themselves the mission attributed by the First Isaiah to the Messianic scion of Jesse (xi, 10, 12), and by the Second Isaiah connected with the personal Servant of Jehovah (xlix, 22). In short, this finished vision contemplates the restored nation as in effect a Messianic people. "And they shall call them, 'The holy people,' 'The redeemed of Jehovah': and thou shalt be called, 'Sought out,' 'A city not forsaken'" (lxii, 12). Such is the idealized destiny of Israel.

The Protagonist and His Campaign

In chapters lxiii and lxiv the prophet, by way of summing up the deep significance of the now culminating prophetic movement, first introduces upon the scene the supreme Protagonist Jehovah Himself recounting His solitary campaign, and then by a natural transition voices the contrite people's penitent response thereto. The passage lxiii, 1–6, wherein Jehovah speaks, merits full quotation here for its dramatic sublimity.

The Prophet

Who is this that cometh from Edom,
With crimsoned garments from Bozrah?
This that is glorious in his apparel,
Marching in the greatness of his strength?

Jehovah

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

The Prophet

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel,
And thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

Jehovah

I have trodden the winepress alone;
And of the peoples there was no man with me:
Yea, I trod them in mine anger,
And trampled them in my wrath;
And their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments,
And I have stained all my raiment.
For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
And the year of my redeemed is come.
And I looked, and there was none to help;
And I wondered that there was none to uphold;
Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me;
And my wrath, it upheld me.
And I trod down the peoples in mine anger,
And made them drunk in my wrath,
And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.

It will be noted that in the Scripture idea vengeance, like the motive of this destructive campaign, is regarded as the sole prerogative of Jehovah (cf. Deut. xxxii, 35; Rom. xii, 19), and that it is represented as taken in the prosecution of "his work, his strange work," that he may "bring to pass his act, his strange act" (Isa. xxviii, 21). Such may be called the paradox of Isaiah's vision. While Jehovah is represented as doing His severe and searching work alone, because He finds none wise or just enough to

do it for Him (cf. xli, 28; lix, 15–17), to His chosen agencies — Israel, Cyrus, the Servant — are prescribed constructive and restorative work, as befits the proper relations of man with man. The passage above quoted answers in an apparently intended way to a passage in the First Isaiah where Jehovah announces that He "hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom" (see xxxiv, 5–15). We have seen how, by all the prophets, Edom is especially denounced, and always for its unbrotherly hatred and treachery.[1] So, in its deep implication, this answering pair of passages seems to describe Jehovah's radical vengeance against the unbrotherliness of man and man, of which wickedness Edom is the speaking type.

Immediately after this sanguinary scene, however, the prophet, returning to Israel, says, "I will make mention of the loving-kindnesses of Jehovah," and in a wonderful contrast brings God near to the heart of man. "In all their affliction," he says, "he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (lxiii, 9; cf. xlvi, 3, 4). The thought of this human tenderness of God rouses the answering thought of Israel's lack of response thereto. They have treated His spirit in such a way that He must fight against them (lxiii, 10); and so, offering a prayer in the name of his people, the prophet makes confession of their sins and ungratefulness, addressing Jehovah, apparently for the first time in a people's prayer, as Father (lxiii, 16; lxiv, 8, 9), though earlier prophets have revealed that intimate relation (i, 2; cf. Jer. iii, 4, 19; xxxi, 9). With this humble confession, he urges before Jehovah a plea for the holy city and Temple, which are still in ruins (lxiii, 17–19; lxiv, 10–12), — an indication that this part of Isaiah may be dated near the end of the exile or early in the return.

[1] See above, pp. 215, 272, notes.

In the closing two chapters, lxv and lxvi, the prophet reaches the apocalyptic height of his message, in the prophecy of the "far-off divine event" to which all this redemptive struggle and development has tended, — nothing less than the creation of new heavens and a new earth, so much more glorious than the present and former things that these will be forgotten (lxv, 17, 18; lxvi, 22, 23). The glorious outlook and its conditions are portrayed with his characteristic enthusiasm. The prospect, however, is not an unclouded glory. There are still elements that make sadly against an era of universal felicity and peace. While Jehovah is inquired of by those that asked not for Him (lxv, 1), yet there are those of His own people still rebellious, their minds still darkened with the corrupt customs of idolatry (lxv, 2–7), men that "prepare a table for Fortune, and that fill up mingled wine unto Destiny," instead of honoring the living God of Israel. His mention of these seems a reversion to the inert and indifferent class to whom chapters xlviii and lvi to lix are addressed. Yet still He will not leave them out of the purpose of mercy. "Thus saith Jehovah," he says, "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it,' so will I do for my servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all" (lxv, 8). Not their idolatry alone, but the vain pride that is engendered by such fashionable culture, is what incurs the disgust of Jehovah. His contempt is poured out on the men that say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose," He says, "a fire that burneth all the day" (lxv, 5). To men of this disposition, whose unholy foreign culture has made them self-inflated and exclusive, the prophet addresses a final warning and discrimination. It is they who in the glad new order will be spiritually starved and forlorn, while Jehovah's true servants, called by another name, shall rejoice in the God of truth and grace (lxv, 13–16).

The Purposed and Clarified Issue

NOTE. It is worthy of remark that while in chapters xl to lv the prophet has uniformly addressed Israel in the singular number as Jehovah's servant,[1] he here drops that term of solidarity and discriminates within the nation itself between servants and outsiders. Only twice before has this plural designation been used, once of the native Israel (liv, 17), and once of converted foreigners becoming servants (lvi, 6) and so sharing the blessings of the "house of prayer for all peoples" (lvi, 7).

Like Ezekiel before him this prophet of the Second Isaiah is looking forward to a Temple rebuilt from ruins, but with a vastly enlarged ideal and with a more inward concept of what the restoration shall mean. To Ezekiel it meant a regained land and a reorganized ecclesiastical service; his ideals and plans were essentially priestly (Ezek. xl–xlviii). To the Second Isaiah it meant a worship befitting "new heavens and a new earth," a régime so much more spacious and generous that the narrow old order no more would come to mind (lxv, 17), and so much more intimate that no thought of ritual is raised. "Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto me? and what place shall be my rest? For all these things hath my hand made, and so all these things came to be, saith Jehovah; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word" (lxvi, 1, 2; cf. lvii, 15).

These words we may take as the sublime summing-up of a prophecy which, setting out with comfort to a redeemed and purified people (xl, 1, 2), encourages them to rise from their long ordeal of exile and avail themselves of the coming of Cyrus to start anew in a recolonized land, a rebuilt Jerusalem, and a newly founded Temple (xliv, 26–28). Here then is adumbrated the Temple that it is their mission to found: as spacious as the universe, as deep laid as the regenerate heart of man. In reading this description one thinks of the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the

[1] See above, p. 315.

first Temple, and of the wonderful spiritual experience that the nation has traversed since then. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!" (1 Kings viii, 27 = 2 Chron. vi, 18). The older relations with Jehovah are indeed to return; but clarified, enlarged, made inward and universal in the loyal spirit of the Servant of Jehovah.

To the prophet, by way of retrospect, all this traces back to a wonderful spiritual birth wherein a whole nation, as it were in a day and after a difficult gestation, is brought to a strange new life (lxvi, 7–9). What specific event, or events, the prophet had in mind we will not undertake to say; we recall, however, the mystic birth of the Immanuel child foretold by the First Isaiah and the actual birth announced,[1] which we have regarded as symbolizing the uprise of a vital regenerating power in the saving remnant; we recall how little growth that power seems to have made when the crisis approached (xxvi, 17–19); how despairing King Hezekiah felt when it actually came because "the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (xxxvii, 3).[2] Yet in spite of this difficult travail — perhaps in consequence of its miraculous deliverance from the Assyrian peril — the nation seems to have leaped to a faith and stamina which survived a century both of persecutions and of corrupting lures, growing all the while; until at length the Second Isaiah could in fervid terms assure them that they were redeemed and ready for a work wherein the nation could prevail in the world as the agency of divine enlightenment and salvation. Some epoch, it would seem, the prophet had in mind, when the nation was born to all this. Was it near the time when Isaiah the son of Amoz, after his long, thankless work, laid down his unfinished vision, leaving it ready, after suitable growth and ripening

[1] See above, pp. 176, 177. [2] See above, pp. 182–184.

had intervened, to be taken up and completed by the later prophet whom we call the Second Isaiah? I am not reluctant to think so. On such line of spiritual birth and development as this recognizes, the Vision of Isaiah, because it is a vision rising beyond the local and temporal into eternal values, is unitary and homogeneous. The whole prophetic landscape is there.

NOTE. With this study of the Second Isaiah, the culmination of Old Testament prophecy, we close our consideration of the literary activities in Chaldea (see above, p. 257). One more work remaining, one of the greatest indeed of all, namely, the Book of Job, which is closely akin in spirit to the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah, is reserved for consideration in a later connection, it being in fact the great classic of the completed canon; see below, pp 463 ff.

II. THE LITERATURE OF REËSTABLISHMENT IN THE HOLY LAND

We have seen how fruitful a seed plot the Chaldea of the exile proved, under the constructive faith of such men as Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Second Isaiah, for the production of that forward-looking literature which we associate with these names. In the material sense that literature was a preparation for the return from exile to the ancestral home, from bondage to freedom. In a spiritual sense it was far more momentous; for it was an indispensable step toward inspiring Israel to be a saving missionary light and power in the world. For this the return was a necessary prerequisite. "It is too light a thing," Jehovah had said to the Servant, "that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. xlix, 6). It was for this great object that the Jewish people's two generations of hidden experience in a land of splendid but sterile religion, during which time they became as it were

immune to the idolatrous disease germ which had so long infected them, was the divinely ordained provision.

For the literary activity that rose out of the experiences of the regained homeland, the situation and impulsion were very different. From a life of relative comfort and prosperity in the richest land of the earth the returned exiles must for many trying years enter the life and bear the hardships of virtual settlers and pioneers. For the Holy Land to which they so joyfully returned, having lain so long waste, was reverting to primitive conditions, and Jerusalem was filled with the chaos and rubbish of ruin.

Back to Hardship and Disillusion

When in 538 B.C. the edict of Cyrus came, permitting all who were so minded to return to Jerusalem and rebuild there the House of Jehovah (Ezra i, 2, 3 = 2 Chron. xxxvi, 23), a caravan numbering nearly fifty thousand, of all classes needed for reorganization (Ezra ii, 64), set out from Chaldea for the eight-hundred-mile journey homeward. The company, only a relatively small proportion of the Jewish people at large, was made up mostly of the younger and more energetic element, born in Chaldea, men who could bear the perils of the way and the toils of resettlement; men too of stanch and sterling faith who, responding to the enthusiastic summons of the Second Isaiah, had consecrated themselves to bear the vessels of Jehovah back to their ancient repository in Jerusalem. The undertaking, as had been promised, was auspicious. "For," the prophet had assured them, "ye shall not go out in haste, neither shall ye go by flight: for Jehovah will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward" (Isa. lii, 11, 12). And it was turning out even so. Monarch and people, natives and kinsfolk, joined in friendly and helpful ways to speed the journey.

As this book is concerned with the literature of the times, we must needs pass over the details of the history that

here supervenes,[1] except as mention of it is necessary as a setting for the literature which the age produced. In 538 B.C., soon after their arrival at Jerusalem, the returned exiles made it their first duty to clear away the débris and erect the altar of burnt offering on the conjectured site of the former one (Ezra iii, 1, 2). It was not until 520 B.C., however, eighteen years later, that they took hold in downright earnest to build the Temple, and not until four years more, just seventy years after the destruction of the first one, that the Second Temple, destined to be the cultural center of Judaism until the time of Herod the Great (37 B.C. to A.D. 4), was dedicated (Ezra vi, 15, 16). The main reason of this delay it is not hard to guess. The people's zeal was chilled by disillusion. Setting out in the fervor of a large but foreshortened prophetic vision, they had not counted on the seeming shrinkage that is sure to come when an object of idealized imagination becomes an object of concrete sense perception. Yet to deal with such shrinkage — keeping the ideal strong and sound at the core of the real — was the essential discipline on which the emancipated people of Israel was now unwittingly embarked. It was a foretaste of the kind of experience that on a more developed scale a later generation encountered when Jesus came to challenge their recognizing faith.[2] They had doubtless fed their awakened hopes on some such good fortune as Isaiah had portrayed in his sixtieth chapter, with visions of eager nations flocking to their light and bringing both pious homage and material prosperity. What they actually found was a demolished Temple, a ruined capital, a desolated countryside, a life of stern toil and poverty. It was a situation fitted to test their spiritual stamina and loyalty. The genuineness of their inner life, that stratum deeper than enthusiasm and

[1] For a very interesting account of all this later Jewish history see Hunter, "After the Exile," Edinburgh, 1890.

[2] See below, p. 531.

immediate interest, was at stake. One is reminded of the truth expressed in a stanza of Matthew Arnold's:

> We cannot kindle when we will
> The fire which in the breast resides.
> The spirit bloweth and is still,
> In mystery our soul abides.
> But tasks in hours of insight will'd
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.[1]

It is with such a national situation as this that the final voice of Old Testament prophecy, the cadence as it were of the prophetic strain, drawing in from the far vision to the pressing emergency, must deal.

I

Prophets of the Rebuilt Temple. "What manner of house will ye build unto me?" Jehovah had said through the Second Isaiah, "and what place shall be my rest" (Isa. lxvi, 1)? The question carried with it the implication running through all the thought of the great prophet, that henceforth the only temple that could satisfy Israel's worship must be as large as heaven and earth, and that their religious life must be sincerely adjusted to the ideal of a world's salvation. Only so could they be true witnesses for Jehovah (cf. Isa. xliii, 12; xlv, 22). But here in their regained home they had fallen on "the day of small things" (Zech. iv, 10); their superficial dream was disillusioned; so they had allowed their prophetic fervor to lapse. And with this lapse there had crept in moral evils which the prophetic spirit, concerned as it was with the claims of a redeemed life, could not suffer to go unreproved. So, before its function was over, prophecy must gird itself for one more appeal. It was a home appeal this time, though still its far horizon was world-wide.

[1] Arnold, "Morality."

Two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, beginning their activity in the same year, — namely, the second year of the Persian king Darius I (520 B.C.), — addressed themselves to the needs of the situation. Their plea, following rather the lines of Ezekiel than of the Second Isaiah, as, indeed, the times demanded, was for the rebuilding of the Temple, that it might become the religious and cultural center which it was meant to be. Both prophets were of the company returned from Chaldea ; their work may properly be reckoned, therefore, among the literary fruits of the exile.

Haggai: Bearing a Message Urgent and Immediate

The reader of the Book of Haggai will miss all seeming care on his part for graces of style or elaboration of treatment; will meet with no striking imagery or fervid prophetic vision. On the other hand, he will find what is more to the purpose in hand, a lucid directness and incisiveness aimed straight at a practical object and counting on practical and concrete effect. His aim was single, urgent, immediate: to rouse the conscience of rulers and people to the work of building the Temple. That was what they were sent home from Babylon to do. On it depended their national idea and perpetuity, their power and influence in the world. The response to his appeal, which was prompt and hearty, showed how true a heart still beat in the bosom of the chosen people. "No prophet," says Dr. Marcus Dods, "ever appeared at a more critical juncture in the history of the people, and, it may be added, no prophet was more successful." In less than a month after he received his word from Jehovah he had the rulers and the people at work.

In all Haggai's prophecy there is no hint of what had so long been a staple of prophetic censure, namely, the insidious blight of idolatry. The people here in the homeland were well purged of that inveterate obsession. Their ordeal of exile, now so happily over, had left them sincerely

and exclusively loyal to their fathers' God Jehovah. And this meant much; it was their return, after long discipline, to the old ways (cf. Hag. ii, 5; Jer. vi, 16). But with this emancipation secured, and with unpropitious conditions trying their faith, new tendencies to evil were creeping in, which the keen sense of prophecy must expose and deal with. For one thing, their God and His service were not yet a thing confirmed and supreme. They were postponing His claims to their own convenience. "This people say, 'The time is not come for Jehovah's house to be built'" (i, 2), was the word of Jehovah to the prophet, which he in turn reported to the governor and the high priest, now the nation's leaders. They had indeed their excuse, in the lean harvests and hard conditions of living (i, 6). But not the people alone, or mainly, were at fault. The leaders themselves, the men of means and influence, were more culpably so. "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste?" (i, 4) was the prophet's trenchant question. Here was the beginning of mischief. It has been suggested that they had used the material gathered for the Temple to build and adorn their own houses. Not unlikely. So the prophet's repeated warning is, "Consider your ways" (i, 5, 7). They had reversed the relations of things, — had made untoward conditions a pretext instead of a warning and lesson. "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith Jehovah of hosts. Because of my house that lieth waste, while ye run every man to his own house" (i, 9). It was a conscience-awakening word, revealing the fact that poor and rich alike were not for necessity but for mere self-indulgence putting off the claims of God and duty. And this could not be allowed to vitiate the wholeness and genuineness of their new-found faith. The unselfish spirit of their prophetic mission was at stake.

Gleams of the Larger Outlook

As soon as the response to Haggai's appeal came, so prompt and practical, the prophet's tone changed to encouragement and promise. The reassurance was in truth necessary and timely. The reconstructed Temple itself, on which such glowing hopes had been founded, must survive the shrinkage of the real from the ideal. It seemed, as soon as they got at work, an insignificant affair as compared with the venerable Solomonic one, which some of the older people remembered (ii, 3; cf. Ezra iii, 12). "Yet now be strong," was the prophet's heartening word, reiterated to one and all (ii, 4); and went on to predict that the promise of Isaiah lx, 4–9, would come true of it, and that the latter glory of the house would be greater than the former, "and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts" (ii, 9).

Haggai's prophecy, as has been said of all this closing strain of prophecy,[1] has drawn in from the large horizon of the Second Isaiah to the present emergency; and yet he adds to it an apocalyptic touch, which leaves the prospect open, as it were, for the larger and limitless view, in his prediction that Jehovah is soon to "shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land" (ii, 6), so that the precious things of all nations shall come to enhance the glory of Jehovah's house. Like all apocalyptics the prediction is a foreshortened vision, and his idea of the intermediate steps thereto is vague, not to say in some ways erroneous. He couples with it, for instance, a promise to Zerubbabel the governor, who is the grandson of Jehoiachin, that Jehovah will make him a signet as His chosen one (ii, 23); a promise which, seeming to imply the resumption of the Davidic dynasty, conflicts with the emphatic prophecy uttered by Jeremiah at the time of the surrender (see Jer. xxii, 24, 30). As a matter of history, Zerubbabel was succeeded by civic governors of other nations, while the real

[1] See above, p. 340.

headship of Israel passed into the hands of the high priest. For the Davidic Shepherd and Anointed One (Messiah) Israel must await the fullness of the time (cf. Gal. iv, 4), and that was far beyond Haggai's horizon.

The promise of a glorified Temple connotes a law and a Temple service to correspond. Haggai cannot well clinch his prophecy without an intimation of this, which like his other utterances strikes close home. In two searching questions to the priests he reverts to that lurking evil of covetous self-indulgence which has brought on Jehovah's monitory infliction of hard times (ii, 10–19). From their answers he deduces the lesson that while the bearing of holy things does not purify by physical contact, uncleanness does spread an evil taint. So it has been hitherto; hence this widespread want and scarcity. The Temple service that shall bring the blessing must be unalloyed and pure, and for this, from the very foundation of the house, the promised glory must wait. "Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree have not brought forth; from this day will I bless you" (ii, 19).

Thus with heartening assurance of success on the one side and a thinly veiled hint of moral taint and drawback on the other, Haggai's downright message justifies its far-reaching motive and principle.

Zechariah: Adding New Visions of Destiny

In the middle of Haggai's work, a few weeks after he had predicted the shaking of the nations and the filling of Jehovah's house with wealth and glory (ii, 6–9), another prophet, Zechariah, began a series of prophetic utterances, the revelations for which were grouped under three dated occasions (see i, 1; i, 7; vii, 1), the last being in the fourth year of King Darius, namely, 518 B.C., two years before the completed edifice was dedicated. His activity was thus contemporary with that of Haggai, beginning two months after

work on the Temple at the urgency of the latter was resumed (cf. Hag. i, 15), and continuing two years after Haggai's. His prophecies, uttered while the builders were zealously at work, did not need to press that phase of the issue; accordingly, taking it for granted, he dealt with the renovated and organized period that would follow, a matter which he brought out in increasing clearness as the work went on.

Thus by wise and timely team work these two postexilic prophets, supplementing each other, led the momentous enterprise of rebuilding and reinstatement within measurable sight of completion. It was this Temple, we will remember, which, known to us as the Second Temple, was the center of reorganized worship and culture, of law and learning and religious administration, until near the coming of Jesus.

NOTE. In both Haggai and Zechariah the prophecies are recorded after the manner of Ezekiel (see above, p. 260), that is, by the dated order of time, without apparent heed to its bearing on logical continuity. The time range here, however, is so limited, and events so keep pace with dates, that (except for one or two slight dislocations easily corrected) the two books move in lucid and orderly progress.

It must here be noted that in considering the Book of the prophet Zechariah we are dealing only with chapters i to viii, as constituting a homogeneous whole. The succeeding chapters, ix to xiv, which will be taken up in the next section, can be clearly understood only as an addition, of other authorship and time, which has somehow come to be incorporated with the original book of Zechariah's prophecy and which goes on to deal with more distinctively apocalyptic values.

The tone of Zechariah's prophecy is much more conciliatory than that of Haggai, and he approaches his subject in the less trenchant and more literary way of vision and parable. He is eminently constructive; taking advantage of all the signs of promise that can be gleaned from the

undeniably poor situation in which his people find themselves, and turning these to hopeful account. "Who hath despised the day of small things?" (iv, 10)—such is the monition, mixed of chiding and cheer, which underlies his message as he observes leaders and people toiling at their work of Temple building and thinking of the more splendid structure of the old time which they are unable to restore (cf. Hag. ii, 3, 4). He must make them aware of their shortcomings, but he must approach them in a tempered austerity. They seem to have lapsed, in a too worldly spirit, into the same unfaith in Jehovah's word as had been the inveterate fault of their fathers in the past (i, 2–4). Even their Temple-building zeal has not cured that. His tactful introduction (i, 1–6), accordingly, reminds them that the ancient word, which though apparently so slow had overtaken their fathers, was still as vital as ever. It is a kind of echo, as it were a cadence, fitted to a less imposing occasion, of the Second Isaiah's more impassioned vindication uttered at the culmination of his prophetic vision (Isa. lv, 8–11; cf. xl, 8). In this discouraging time the people need to know that the word has never yet been known to fail. It had so "overtaken" their fathers that they had turned and confessed, "Like as Jehovah of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us."

The Overtaking Word of Jehovah

Three months after this introductory message was given (i, 7) the word of Jehovah which came to Zechariah, and which makes up the main body of his book (i, 7–vi, 15), was set forth in a series of visions, eight in all, of coördinated reach and meaning. To understand the prophet's drift in these visions, we must needs consider the situation of things in the government. Five months before, Haggai had spurred rulers and people out of their apathy and self-indulgence to build

Visions Merging in Literal Design

their Temple, and they were zealously at work; but they were fresh from two generations of captivity, and it does not appear that they had much organization either civil or religious. These visions are Zechariah's parable method of meeting this undeveloped state of things.

The visions fall into two groups (namely, i, 7–iii, 10, and iv, 1–vi, 15), with four in each, the prophet making transition from the first group to the second by a wakening as it were out of sleep (iv, 1). Leading up to and down from two central visions wherein respectively Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the civil governor are named and instructed, these two groups of parables (or realistic pictures) are the prophet's chosen method of constructing a kind of model for the reorganized commonwealth. In his idea it is to be a dual government, in which the sacred and the secular elements, represented by these two men, are to have coöperative functions. "These," his informing angel says, "are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (iv, 11–14).

It seems, however, that in the course of these prophetic visions events occur which change the immediate outcome, making it less concrete, more apocalyptic. Broached while the civil ruler (Zerubbabel) is still of Jewish race and in fact a lineal heir to the Davidic throne, they seem to build too premature hopes on his person; for as it turned out he soon disappeared from history, and except Nehemiah no civil governor of Jewish race succeeded him. He is assured of living till the Temple is finished and the "plummet" is in his hands (iv, 9, 10); but when memorial crowns are brought forth only Joshua is named, and the rulership is somewhat vaguely attributed to "the man whose name is the Branch" (vi, 12), while the headship of the state is sacred and priestly (cf. vi, 13). This transition from dual to single, however, is essentially of the prophetic ideal. The center and main significance of the state is in the Temple now

rebuilding; its basic principle, as urged upon Zerubbabel himself, not military nor political but spiritual. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts" (iv, 6). The prophet is thus minded, while not ignoring civic obligations, to make the distinctive ideals of the sanctuary the dominant principle of the reorganized state. This we may regard as the keynote of his prophetic message.

NOTE. *The Range of Zechariah's Visions.* As above remarked, the eight visions — or pictured scenes — of Zechariah fall into two groups of four each; the first group (i, 7–iii, 10) leading up to Joshua and his function in the enlarged state, the second group (iv, 1–vi, 8) pairing Zerubbabel with him and leading down through civic ideals to the starting-point. There is thus a kind of concatenation in the whole range of visions. Note the series in their order.

A. First Group, leading up through prophetic symbols to Joshua

1. The man in the myrtle-tree grove, who with horses has traversed the earth and finds it everywhere at rest. Meant perhaps as a gentle corrective to Haggai's prediction, uttered four months previously (Hag. ii, 6–8), that Jehovah would soon shake the earth and cause all sorts of prosperity to flow into the rebuilt house; but going on to report Jehovah's anger at the general supineness of the nations (i, 15), and the awaking of Jehovah's zeal for the welfare and mission of Zion. i, 7–17.

2. The horns, — alien powers, — which heretofore have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, and the smiths appointed to terrify and demolish them, — as if clearing the way for Israel's larger and freer destiny. i, 18–21.

3. The man with the measuring line, come to measure Jerusalem for walls, but peremptorily forbidden because any walls whatever will eventually be too small to contain her enlargement and prosperity. — Used, along with the preceding, to call in those who dwell yet "with the daughter of Babylon" to escape her lures and cast in their lot with their regenerated homeland. ii, 1–13.

4. The Satan seen standing at the right hand of Joshua the high priest, to be his adversary. For thus maligning "a brand plucked out of the fire" he is sternly rebuked by Jehovah; but Joshua, in turn, who is clothed in filthy garments, is reclothed in clean priestly apparel and insignia. — Used as occasion to impress upon Joshua his high responsibilities and to appoint him and his colleagues as a sign of holier

things; "for behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch," who in one day will purge the land from its iniquity and insure an era of prosperous peace. iii, 1–10.

B. Second Group, bringing promise to the civic ruler Zerubbabel, and going on to give civic and ethical symbols

5. The golden candlestick with its seven lamps fed through seven pipes from two olive trees growing at the right hand and at the left. Used as symbol of the two anointed ones, sacred and civic agencies of Jehovah's essentially spiritual work, but directed especially to Zerubbabel, whose mission is to be accomplished not by material but by spiritual means, and who will finish what his hands have begun. iv.

6. The huge flying roll, sent forth over the face of the whole land as the "curse" — or mentor — to unearth and consume theft and perjury wherever these hide themselves. A suggestive symbol, valid to-day, of the penetrative and purifying power of literature as a factor for good. v, 1–4.

7. The hag wickedness, imprisoned in the barrel (ephah), weighted down with a leaden disk (talent), and borne forth by two women out of the Holy Land to the land of Shinar, where Babylon is and where is her own fitting place. A symbol of the banishment of business fraud. v, 5–11.

8. The chariots and horses, symbols of the four winds of heaven, sent forth to and fro through the earth, and reporting the appeasement of Jehovah's spirit in the north country. It is as if here the series of visions were closed with the promise of solution, as an offset to the beginning (cf. ii, 11–15) when Jehovah's anger was roused by the apathy of the nations. vi, 1–7.

A historical supplement, however, follows this last vision, in which supplement the prophet is directed to make crowns out of silver and gold brought by a deputation from Babylon, and set them upon the head of Joshua, but instead of naming also Zerubbabel (who seems to have disappeared) the prophet puts in his place "the man whose name is the Branch." These crowns are then to be laid up as memorials in the rebuilt Temple. vi, 9–15.

Thus these visions of Zechariah, opening comforting outlooks to suit "the day of small things" (cf. iv, 10), enlarge their scope to take in the Messianic values predicted two generations before by Jeremiah, whose presage of the "righteous Branch" and his beneficent reign (Jer. xxiii, 5–8;

xxxiii, 15–18), strengthened later by Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah, is taken as an assured truth of prophetic foresight, which these narrower conditions do not avail to dim or make uncertain.

Fasting Customs of the Exile Yielding to the Vital Issue

Two years after Zechariah had brought his cheering visions to his people, a deputation from Bethel came to the Temple to lay before the priests and the prophets a question about fasting. The custom of fasting had become an established institution during the seventy years of the captivity; it and the observance of the sabbath seem to have been the only general forms of organized religious custom open to the Jews in the foreign land.[1] But in the prophetic ideal fasting was subject to grave abuses; it was not according to the spirit that the prophets were minded to cultivate in Israel. It was essentially a separative act, self-regarding (vii, 5, 6), mindful only of past afflictions and wrongs, tending to draw away a man's regards from the welfare and fellowship of his neighbor. The Second Isaiah had already corrected this tendency to exclusiveness which the fasting custom promoted, and had emphasized the same better way which Zechariah now inculcates (see Isa. lviii, 1–11). That better way was the way of tolerance, mercy, neighborliness, beneficence; and this was not consistent with the mournful and ascetic spirit connoted by fasting. To this latter spirit the people were already too prone; they had let the exile harden them not only against other nations but against their own less fortunate neighbors and sojourners (vii, 11, 12).

Accordingly the prophet takes occasion of this deputation's inquiry not, indeed, to legislate either for the regulation or abolition of the custom but to inculcate such a genial spirit of tolerance, compassion, and brotherly kindness as would virtually supersede all fasting austerities, turning them into occasions of joy and cheerful feasts (vii, 8–10; viii, 18, 19).

[1] See above, p. 328.

If they would keep their custom, let it be a hopeful and upbuilding one. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: 'The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love truth and peace'" (viii, 19).

Thus, adapting itself to "the day of small things," Zechariah's body of prophecy is like taking Isaiah lvi to lxvi with its cosmic and universal reference and translating it into terms suited to Jerusalem and the recovered homeland. In doing so his appeal is to the spiritual values which alone can make Judah great (cf. iv, 6); and like the earlier prophets he takes his stand uncompromisingly on that common and as it were domestic righteousness which witnesses to Jehovah's will by sincere justice to and love of neighbor as exerted to the humblest and most needy. It is his gentler way of correcting the bad tendencies against which Haggai so bluntly contended, and setting up a constructive impulse in character to match their newly awakened constructive zeal for their Temple. The ancient word of Jehovah has indeed "overtaken" them. "Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited? . . . Thus hath Jehovah of hosts spoken, saying, 'Execute true judgment, and show kindness and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the sojourner, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart'" (vii, 7–10). It is the ideal that men like Ezekiel have planned and prepared for (cf. Ezek. xviii, 8; xlv, 9), the true law of the rebuilt Temple.

With such a foundation laid, the rest of Zechariah's prophecy can let itself go in pure blessing and promise, a summarizing climax of heartening presage. Prefacing each

prediction with the reiterated "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts," he leads his book up to its culmination (and perhaps that of Old Testament prophecy), in the eighth chapter, by a progressive series of ten prophetic words, in which, as it were, he domesticates the vision of Isaiah in the home city and land. The most touching of these predictions, perhaps, is the idyllic picture he draws, in viii, 4, 5, of the Jerusalem that is some day to be. It will be remembered that when the Jews returned from exile to the toils and hardships of a repatriated homeland, only the hardy and middle-aged could stand the journey and settlement; the dearth of the very young and the very old was a saddening feature of the return. What blessing could be greater than to have these again in a restored social environment? "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, 'There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.'" To such a normal social make-up the austerity of ritual fasting is incongruous and irrelevant (viii, 18, 19). Nor will such a city be any more a self-centered and exclusive place; its attractiveness for all nations, and its kindly hospitality, will realize the consummation with which long ago the dreams of Isaiah and Micah began and which the Second Isaiah wrought into the Jewish redemptive spirit (viii, 23; cf. Isa. ii, 2–4 = Mic. iv, 1–5; lx, 14, 15).

A Prophetic Decalogue

II

The Subsidence of Prophecy. Comparison of Zechariah's word with that of the other literary prophets seems to reveal the fact that with him and his time the momentous prophetic movement, active and strenuous since the days of Amos and Hosea,[1] is nearing its close. Its long fight with

[1] Joel also, in my view; see above, pp. 143–147.

the corruptions and iniquities of idolatry is over; and the impassioned warnings and promises it has infused into the people's mind remain as vital as ever, an undying element of the nation's permanent literature. Zechariah's words, saying little about either the fight or the far triumph of spiritual forces, yet eminently encouraging and constructive, are like a kind of cadence, preparing for the pause where a new strain of thought and sentiment may begin. The impulsive effort of prophecy must be succeeded by the orderly and steadying régime of law. The rebuilt Temple and the visions of an organized government are the signs of this. So from Zechariah's time on, literary prophecy has little more to say. Two more prophetic books remain to be considered, both seeming to be anonymous, and these, while containing important and vivid oracles, yet are like a kind of subsidence, largely apocalyptic in nature, letting the prophetic attitude down to a habit of calm expectancy, while the more prosaic and matter-of-fact affairs of the repatriated nation go on their way.

Anonymous Oracles Appended to *Zechariah*

It has been remarked above[1] that our exposition of the Book of Zechariah included only chapters i to viii. That section of the book, as we have seen, is quite homogeneous in theme and treatment, and is put in the prophet's name. All belongs to a definitely specified time and to clearly discernible conditions. What follows, however, — namely, chapters ix to xiv, — is of very different character. Without giving author or date, it purports in general to communicate two burdens, or oracles, "of the word of Jehovah": one (chapters ix to xi) seeming meant not only for Israel but for the world at large as thought of in Jewish terms; the other (chapters xii to xiv) dealing with certain obscure and turbulent yet eventually victorious destinies of Israel itself. No clear result, as

[1] See above, p. 345.

regards either style or substance, comes from attributing these chapters to the pen or the restricted time of Zechariah; nor indeed do scholars agree on any time before or after the exile that can be certainly verified from known events. They seem, indeed, like the concluding chapters of Isaiah, to belong to some era independent of historical annals. On the whole, so far as their prophetic tissue is colored by time at all, they seem to reflect an age considerably later than Zechariah, an age wherein a momentous apocalyptic solution of things is drawing nigh. It is thought by scholars that these chapters were a kind of prophetic waif which, when the so-called "Book of the Twelve"[1] was made up for the Scripture canon, was appended to the last of the named prophets, the Book of Zechariah.

Broken Gleams of the Coming Order

It must not be inferred, however, that this section of our book is of subordinate importance or merely a stray incident of prophetic utterance. Rather, its relation to the body of literary prophecy is intimate and cardinal. It strikes consistently into the large divine outlook; only, it is farther along the line, over the nearer horizon as it were, where not specific events but religious and cultural conditions fill the field of vision. Those conditions, though real and grounded, are to an extent shadowy and confused; it is as if the prophet, schooled in the concepts of his time and race, lacked terms to make his vision real and literal in terms of the later era. Hence the inevitable obscurity of his utterance. In Wordsworth's poetic phrasing he is

> Moving about in worlds not realized.

He has the mental impression of an order strange to his habitual conceptions, like a shimmering background, on

[1] In the Jewish make-up what we call the "minor prophets" (Hosea to Malachi) were grouped as a single Scripture book and designated as "the Book of the Twelve." See G. A. Smith, "The Book of the Twelve Prophets" (Expositor's Bible), Vol. I, pp. 3, 4.

which here and there gleam out things more visualized and concrete, which give solidity and meaning to the general spectacle. What situation, what movement of prophetic forms, lies thus displayed before him?

I think the conditions which on the whole best answer to the prophet's vision are those leading up to and surrounding the advent of the Messianic king. In other words, it is the Christian order and era, with glimpses of the way in which it is apprehended and treated. The Messianic king, now for the first time so called, — his, in fact, is the figure most concretely portrayed (ix, 9, 10), and so remarkably so that the description is taken up by a New Testament writer and identified with our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem at his final appearance there (cf. Matt. xxi, 4, 5). This makes the prophetic situation distinctively Messianic. Other touches seem to reveal in almost clairvoyant vividness dramatic moments in Jesus' career, especially as related to men's reception of him. We may instance the passage about the thirty pieces of silver, xi, 12, 13 (cf. Matt. xxvi, 14, 15; xxvii, 3–5); also the passage about looking upon him whom men have pierced, xii, 10 (cf. John xix, 34–37). These gleams of concrete acts, however, like things in a psychic's dream, are only imperfectly coördinated to a lucid and verifiable historic tissue. The prophet's vision is still in the glamor of apocalypse, not yet literal prediction.

Enough is made definite and positive, however, to show that what the prophet has at the back of his mind is the difficult reconcilement of a reluctant people to the light and virtue of an essentially Christian order. The method of his utterance is admittedly obscure, for the vision extends beyond his horizon. What he dreams of, in fact, is merely Judaism raised to an ideal power. But that indeed is what Christianity in its time set out to be; that was the legitimate aim and service of prophecy.

The Uphill Way to a Hard-Won Goal

Let us trace some of the stages in the prophet's idea.

1. In his oracle on the nations (ix–xi) he puts himself at a period when the peoples adjoining Palestine to north and west are united with Jehovah's people in the same privilege and protection from alien invasion and oppression. Here he announces to "the daughter of Zion" the coming of her king; whose royal progress is described not in terms of splendor but in a character modeled on the idea of the lowly yet prevailing Servant of Jehovah, as we have seen him portrayed in Second Isaiah (ix, 9, 10; cf. Isa. xlii, 1–4; xlix, 7). His entry is spiritual, the advent of justice, goodwill, salvation; and this is the type of the régime that is up for men's acceptance or rejection. His coming is followed by the emancipation of the "prisoners of hope" from "the pit wherein is no water" (ix, 11, 12), and by what reads like a battle of world cultures between the two great spiritual forces of the world. "I will stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and will make thee as the sword of a mighty man" (ix, 13). This, as we know, has been the great conflict of ages; modern times have expressed it as the struggle between Hebraism and Hellenism.[1] In this conflict both Judah and Ephraim, shoulder to shoulder, will rise to enhanced strength and valor; the dispersed ones, too, will be brought home from the nations where they have been scattered, to walk in the strength and safety of a reunited people.

Here, however, from the presage of the issue the prophet's thoughts return to the arduous way thereto, with its sad lack of response and appreciation. There are infirmities and perversities to be encountered, as would be natural in so great a revolution. This is symbolized by Jehovah's

[1] Readers will hardly need to be reminded of Matthew Arnold's "Culture and Anarchy" (especially chapter iv), in which with a keen yet one-sided view of the Hebrew mind he pleads for the less austere and more cultured Hellenism,—a critical judgment that has had enormous influence in our day.

dealing with the "shepherds," who in prophetic parlance are the acknowledged cultural leaders of Israel, and who, as already prophesied, are to be replaced by a supreme Shepherd.[1] Their proneness to heathen divinations and futilities have left shepherdless the people chosen to prevail (x, 2, 3); so Jehovah is minded to provide means to feed "the flock of slaughter, whose possessors slay them, . . . and their own shepherds pity them not" (xi, 4, 5). To this end the prophet, in a passage of allegory, identifies himself with the true shepherd, and essays to feed and guard the flock. He takes two staves for the purpose, which he names "Beauty" and "Bands" (or, as our abstract idiom might put it, "Grace" and "Unity"), — the saving cultural virtues of an educated people. But his endeavors are soon baffled. Only the poor of the flock sensed his valuable service when he expelled the extortionate shepherds; so he had to break the staff of Grace; and when, feeling his service done and despised, he called for his wages, he received only the paltry hire of a slave, whereat he broke the second staff (Unity), "that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" (xi, 7–14). This allegory was later associated with the Judas episode in the betrayal and rejection of Jesus (see Matt. xxvii, 9, 10); it should be noted that the passage there quoted (xi, 13) is attributed to Jeremiah.

After this allegory of contempt the prophet, taking them according to their desert, assumes "the instruments of a foolish shepherd," and leaving them thus to the mercy of what they desire, predicts the coming of one who will neglect their welfare and feed himself from their fatness; his final denunciation being, "Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock!" (xi, 15–17). The great danger to their cultural prosperity, after all, is from their choice of and affinity with false and greedy leaders; the true leader must survive only as the ultimate fittest and best.

[1] See above, pp. 272, 273.

2. In the oracle concerning Israel (xii–xiv) the prophet's regards are centered in Jerusalem, as the capital and type of the matured and dynamic influence of Israel, a city destined by the all-Creator who "formeth the spirit of man within him" to be "a cup of reeling" and "a stone of burden" for all the peoples round about as they gather together in the siege against Jerusalem. It is a picture very different from that of Isaiah lx, infinitely broader than Haggai's restricted Temple vision (Hag. ii, 6–9), yet in the same line of spiritual evolution. In drawing it the prophet avails himself of well-seasoned prophetic symbols. The figure of intoxication is used by Jeremiah to describe the effects of Babylonian culture on the nations, Israel included (Jer. li, 7), and, indeed, he has anticipated our prophet in this idea as applied to Israel's similar agency (Jer. xxv, 15–17). The stone has figured in Isaiah as "a stone of stumbling" (Isa. viii, 14) and a foundation corner stone (xxviii, 16), but its effects are for Israel itself; here in Zechariah it is a stone of burden heavy and grievous for alien nations to handle, — "all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded" (xii, 3). The ideas thus taken up and reapplied have been gathering head ever since the beginning of the prophetic movement; we trace its germs in Isaiah's redeeming remnant (Isa. x, 20), in the scion of Jesse (xi, 10; xlix, 22), onward to the prevailing mission of the collective Servant of Jehovah (xli, 15, 16). It is the idea that Israel is destined to be a kind of spiritual touchstone, a highly charged cultural force, which the world will cope with at its bliss or peril. I have already noted it in connection with Ezekiel's oracles on the nations who rejoiced at or profited by Israel's calamity.[1] The same idea reappears in connection with our Lord's life and ministry (see Luke ii, 34; Matt. xxi, 44). Here in Zechariah it is rather rudimentally sensed; but the prophet seems to feel a Messianic power,

[1] See above, p. 271.

not confined to an individual Personage but residing in a regenerate commonwealth of which a renewed Jerusalem is the type. I regard it as a dim presage of the power of Christian vigor and culture. It is on this conception of the matter, I think, that the meaning of this difficult oracle opens most lucidly.

What the prophet is aware of, however, is not so much an accomplished end as a process. In a Jerusalem that could let its true leader labor in vain and would take up with a foolish and worthless shepherd (xi, 15, 17) there must be siege and sifting, there must be assimilation of new elements, there must be fiery assay as of silver and gold (xiii, 9). The rest of the oracle is concerned with various aspects of this experience. In the siege that occurs, wherein Judah is at first wavering (xii, 2), there seems to be a new segmentation of the people, as it were between the classes and the populace; the former, "the chieftains of Judah," coming to depend more upon "the inhabitants of Jerusalem," while the latter, identified largely with "the house of David," increase in strength and godlikeness to a victorious power. Then follows the "spirit of grace and supplication," and bitter mourning, as the inhabitants of Jerusalem look upon "him whom they have pierced"[1] (xii, 10–14). Following on this is "a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness." The effect of this is that the inveterate idolatrous infection of Israel is purged away and forgotten (xiii, 2); and with it goes even the professional prophecy which has long perverted public opinion, — its practitioners discredited by their own kin and ashamed of themselves as they think how it has enslaved them (xiii, 3–5). The era of guesswork is over; a larger fulfillment is in sight; the time is evidently ripe for "the subsidence of prophecy."

[1] Or "*me* whom they have pierced" (xii, 10) identified, as also in the final act of deliverance (xiv, 3, 4), with Jehovah himself.

But the shepherd, — what of him? The prophet who essayed the task had to break the staves of Beauty and Bands (Grace and Unity), the symbols of the true atmosphere of culture, and a worthless shepherd has had sway. The sword is here invoked against the true Shepherd, "the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts"; he must be smitten and the sheep scattered; a sad negative, it would seem, to what the Second Isaiah so unconditionally announced (xiii, 7; cf. Isa. xl, 11). The sequel is a further reduction of the saved to a surviving third part, who in turn are purified by furnace, like the most precious ore. The ultimate assay of regenerate character must be radical and complete.

The Dénouement: when Jehovah Takes the Field in Person

In a final apocalyptic passage of great sublimity the dénouement is ushered in, — no new idea, but a detailed iteration of what has been the crowning feature of the Isaian vision. After all the confusions and bafflements of human mind and conduct, Jehovah takes the field in person. "And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one" (xiv, 9). One's thoughts go back to prophecies like Isaiah xxviii, 21; xli, 28; l, 2; lix, 16; lxiii, 5; wherein man's utter failure was God's supreme occasion. In the passage before us this prophecy is wrought out to its final expression.

A decisive siege and sack of Jerusalem, accompanied by the hideous atrocities of ruthless war, is the introduction. Then Jehovah, entering the conflict, takes his stand on the mount of Olives over against the city; and forthwith the mountain is cleft in twain, opening a great valley to east and west, through which his rescued ones escape. There follows on this a strange day, like a kind of twilight, in which things are dim and undefined; "but it shall come to pass that at evening time there shall be light" (xiv, 7). Then Ezekiel's vision of living waters is repeated (see Ezek. xlvii, 1–12); only now, instead of flowing merely from

the Temple to the Dead Sea region, these waters flow from Jerusalem to both the eastern and the western seas, and perennially, summer and winter (xiv, 8). If this apocalyptic picture is not an idle fancy, — if a great truth was rising before the prophet's inner eye, — one must find room for its growing fulfillment not in an exclusive Judaism but in the undying power of Christian light and truth. Such prophecy may subside when it has said its say; its divine vitality does not subside.

In estimating the meaning of what follows, as the oracle goes through various incidents of detail and emerges to culmination, we must still bear in mind that though a limitless stretch of sublime vision lies before him the prophet can use only the terms and concepts which he can share with his readers, and which must be left to after times to project to the deeper values that the ages have in store. He himself too, looking to worlds not realized, is but a citizen of Jerusalem and imbued with the peculiar ideas of Judaism; his vocabulary cannot well transcend that fact. It is the way with all the prophets; it must needs be so. One is reminded of Tennyson's description of Arthur's knights, with their fervid but sometimes futile ideals:

> For these have seen according to their sight.
> For every fiery prophet in old times,
> And all the sacred madness of the bard,
> When God made music thro' them, could but speak
> His music by the framework and the chord;
> And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

The sight enlarges, undergoes transformation and correction; the truth is not dimmed or outgrown.

Let us not deem it strange or belittling, therefore, if our oracle, after a kind of excursion among nations and sweeping conditions, wherein anew their relation to the transcendent power centered in the spiritual Jerusalem is trenchantly depicted (xiv, 12–19), emerges at length to a situation, as it

were homely and domestic, wherein things have fallen into normal and peaceful order, as in a permanent home. "And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely" (xiv, 11). It is noteworthy that the concrete symbol of this perfected well-being, the cynosure of attraction and pilgrimage, is not the sanctuary, as with Ezekiel, but the feast of tabernacles, the secular feast of the year wherein the domestic and industrial blessings of life were brought to memory and thanksgiving; that the homeliest utensils of work and household are as sacred as the vessels of the Temple; and that the spirit of trade and commercial greed shall no more invade the house of Jehovah.[1] It is the idealized commonwealth, described in terms of common men and everyday affairs; a state in which sacred and secular are no more at odds, but all is alike holy.

Malachi: Prophet of Jehovah's Messenger

On a previous page[2] Zechariah is spoken of as "the last of the named prophets," while the latter part of his book (ix–xiv) is regarded as consisting of two anonymous oracles which have somehow come to be appended to his original work. Each of these oracles has a peculiar heading ("The burden of the word of Jehovah," Zech. ix, 1; xii, 1), a heading which occurs only in one other place, namely, at the beginning of the Book of Malachi. This book, accordingly, is by many, perhaps most, scholars held to belong to the same group of left-over oracles and to be, like the others, anonymous. The name "Malachi," which as translated "my messenger" reappears at chapter iii, 1, does not in itself sound like a proper name, though it may be a contraction of "Malachiah."

[1] "No more a Canaanite," xiv, 21. The word "Canaanite," from the ruling propensity of that nation, came to mean a trafficker or trader, and this acquired with the more magnanimous a tinge of odium, like our word "huckster." One sees this in the original of Prov. xxxi, 24; Isa. xxiii, 8; Ezek. xvii, 4; Hos. xii, 7; Zeph. i, 11.

[2] See above, p. 354.

The book, at any rate, gets more meaning from the word as a designation of its principal prediction than from its use as the name of a person who otherwise is wholly unknown.

Malachi is about three quarters of a century later than Haggai and Zechariah; whether later also than the two appended oracles is uncertain. It belongs to the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, who did their reforming and rebuilding work in the years from 458 to 432 B.C., and reflects quite faithfully the degenerate conditions of those times, especially before Ezra's pentateuchal law had taken its fixed hold on the people's mind. It impresses one as if for the last time the prophetic force were injected into a race which had almost ceased to be alive to its fervid and cogent spirit.

Getting at the Heart of Things

The whole tone of this prophet's message evinces his feeling that the time has come to speak out bluntly and plainly, no longer mincing matters with apocalyptic dreams but exhibiting conditions as they are and as they tend. The community has drifted along in its perfunctory Temple and priest régime until this has become an old story. It seems, as it were, to be running itself, and at the cheapest and easiest rate. Such a state of things, with its careless self-indulgence, can incur only one result: it brings upon itself the inevitable blight of a torpid conscience, heedless of moral and spiritual claims. This seems to have been the prevailing evil of the prophet's time; and this, just this, is what the prophetic spirit and ideal can least tolerate. The whole labor of the prophetic movement from the beginning has been with a nation's conscience, to waken and educate it for a unique mission in the world. Hence our prophet's message, which evidently is given at a time when prophetic and even religious fervor is subsiding, is virtually a straight appeal to conscience, to the heart and meaning of things.

His literary method, which is quite different from what we find elsewhere, is peculiarly adapted to this object. It

consists in first launching some incisive proposition — something calculated to rouse reaction or doubt — and then, after asking the question that is sure to rise, proceeding to explain and enforce. It is a kind of Socratic dialectic employed not for philosophical inquiry but for spiritual conviction. The truths with which it deals are truths of the moral nature, which do not depend on logical premises, and which cannot be gainsaid. Thus it is not so much argumentative as expository and assertive, — as indeed is the native bent of the Hebrew mind. Its objective is not reflection but conduct.

NOTE. For this general cast of the Hebrew mind, as compared with the Hellenic, see above, pp. 37–39. The same distinction is touched upon also in connection with the wisdom literature, p. 94. It is worth noting that Malachi's activity fell in the age of Socrates, when Greek thinking and literature began to be an influence in the ideas of mankind; not that he drew from Greek methods, but that the human mind in general was coming to more systematic and logical formation of opinion, in a word, more intellectuality.

Scoring the General Decadence, Clerical and Common

In a series of such challenging attacks the prophet launches his indictment of the nation's torpid conscience, addressing in turn the different classes — priests, nobility,[1] and general body — and scoring the specific failing prevalent in each. Thus, going through the whole social order, he concludes them all under their peculiar tendencies to sin, — a significant summary of the conditions against which the coming of the messenger is due.

He begins with the clergy, who as guardians of the organized Temple régime have the nation's spiritual welfare in charge. "For the priest's lips," he says, "should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for

[1] So for distinction we may perhaps designate the quasi-aristocratic class addressed as "Judah" (ii, 11), doubtless identical with the "chieftains of Judah," Zech. xii, 5, — there distinguished from the "inhabitants of Jerusalem" who are of the rank and file.

he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts" (ii, 7). It is not the claims of law, however, that he urges upon them, but of loyalty and service. Introducing his plea by a proof drawn from the contrasted doom and destiny of Edom that the brother nation of Israel is the favored object of Jehovah's love (i, 2–5), he takes the priests on the ground of the honor and reverence due to such paternal and filial relation. "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I am a father, where is mine honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith Jehovah of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name" (i, 6). To their assumed question, "Wherein have we despised thy name?" he goes on to specify that they offer for sacrifice to Jehovah gifts that they would not offer to their ruler, blind and lame and sick and blemished, so that the God whom the Gentiles honor (i, 11, 14) is made contemptible among his own people; besides, the whole order of service is perfunctory and irksome to them, they have no heart in it or respect for it, and they shame their priestly ancestry in Levi, whose relations with God and people were genuine and just, in contrast to theirs, which have made them contemptible and base, false guardians of right and justice (i, 6–ii, 9).

Against the notables ("Judah"), the pace-setters of public sentiment and conduct, who seem to rank as a kind of aristocracy, his indictment is more fundamental. His name for it is treachery. "Have we not all one father?" he asks; "hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers" (ii, 10)? As the foul type of this treachery he attacks the alarming prevalence of divorce, which is a deadly blow at the most sacred and helpful relation in life, that relation in which husband and wife become one. Judah had "married the daughter of a foreign god" (ii, 11), thus dealing treacherously with the "wife of his youth," his companion, and the wife of his covenant. In their comparative

poverty and disfavor, it would seem, the custom had grown of putting away the native Hebrew wives, probably in order to marry into families of greater wealth and distinction among the more prosperous people of the surrounding provinces. But this was more than family unfaithfulness; it bred wholesale falseness and wrong in a people that should be neighbors and kindred. So when the Lord came as a refiner's fire to His Temple, His judgment would be against a sad accumulation of evils. "And I will be a swift witness," is the oracle, "against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts" (iii, 5). The torpid conscience has much to answer for, among people as among priests. It has let in evils that have poisoned the whole tissue of society.

The people in general, too, come in for their share in the prophet's censure, and it reduces to much the same cause. Their religion has ceased to be a religion of faith. They seem to have regarded the service of Jehovah as a kind of barter, wherein they are no longer getting the worth of their money, and they do not scruple to rob God of the tithes and offerings that are His due (iii, 8), disposed as they are to count the paying values of life in terms of sheer worldliness. The prophet's summary of the matter is, "Ye have said, 'It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? and now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape'" (iii, 14, 15). So near to a reversal of their spiritual allegiance the prophet has found his people. Yet if they are minded to buy their blessings, he assures them of the right and rewarding way, namely, to prove Jehovah with an honest tithe (iii, 10–12).

But he turns intrepidly, as the prophets have done before, as the supplementary Zechariah has done (cf. Zech. xiii, 9), to the little-heeded nucleus, sole faithful among the faithless. It is as if the chosen people were reduced again to a small remnant. But to them the promise is still strong and unfailing. "Then they that feared Jehovah," it is written as of an accomplished fact, "spake one with another; and Jehovah hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name" (iii, 16). A new note is here struck. The former remnant was the pledge and germ of redemption, a pledge which the Second Isaiah saw fulfilled. Here the note is of fellowship, "one to another." One of the sweetest tributes of all prophecy is reserved for such fellowship and mutual understanding in steadfast loyalty (iii, 17); it defines the principle out of which is to come the regeneration of society.

The Messenger and his Function

We have called Malachi the prophet of Jehovah's messenger, the messenger that the priests of the reorganized commonwealth ought to have been (cf. ii, 7) but failed to be. With their insincere and perfunctory ministrations, the mark of a torpid conscience, they were doing nothing to prepare Jehovah's way before Him. The messenger's power and function, on the other hand, must be prophetic, charged with all the vital spirit of prophecy. Yet his function is not executive but preparatory (iii, 1). Elijah the prophet, who is identified with him, is sent to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (iv, 6), that is, to induce such unity of idea and sympathy as shall be the fitting preparedness for "the day that I make" (or, "that I do this" cf. iii, 17; iv, 3). We know how some four hundred and seventy-five years afterward this prophecy of "my messenger" was on Jesus' own authority interpreted of John the Baptist, whom for the

work he did Jesus held to be "a prophet, and much more than a prophet" (see Matt. xi, 7–15; xvii, 10–13). Thus the last word of Old Testament prophecy joins with the first word of the New Testament prophecy, a word wherein prediction passes into fulfillment. All is in the same line of preparation for the greatest event of history, and prophecy subsides only to bide its time until its next word shall be final.

As compared, however, with the searching sequel for which it is a preparation, this function of the messenger is only preliminary and prelusive, as befits the last brave potency of an old spiritual order. Its significance centers in what it introduces. Along with "the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire" is One greater; "the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple" (iii, 1). It will not do to cramp this prediction to literalism by referring it to Jesus' entry into the Temple and his expulsion of the traders and money-changers (John ii, 13–17), though this belongs to the advent of the same momentous order. The prophet's vision, while it comports with this, is much more far-reaching. And here a new prophetic symbolism controls the vision, one hitherto only touched upon (cf. Isa. xlviii, 10; Zech. xiii, 9), the symbol of the refiner's fire. We will recall how the Second Isaiah's ruling symbolism of coming blessing was that of water, with its connotation of refreshing, fertility, and cleansing (Isa. xli, 17–19; xliii, 20; xliv, 3; xlix, 10; lv, 1). Ezekiel too, from his priestly and ritual sense of things, promises a like purifying by water (Ezek. xxxvi, 25). Here the sense goes deeper than outward prosperity and enlivening to the inner centers of regenerate character, and its radical results correspond (iii, 3–6). The prophet's further description of the day of fire presents a very significant contrast. To the wicked it figures as a consuming furnace, working complete destruction of their proud and base ambitions. To those that fear

Jehovah's name, on the other hand, "shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings" (iv, 2), — like the fire of opulent and orderly nature, in which is joy and growth and strength.

In the New Testament use of this symbolism, the transition from the old to the new order is definitely made in terms of water and fire; the former being adopted by John the Baptist as the meaning of his preparatory mission (Matt. iii, 11), the latter recognized by Jesus as the meaning of his own ministry (Luke xii, 49, 50) and passed on to literal fulfillment in the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts i, 5; ii, 1–4). Thus prophecy subsides, to make room for something better.

CHAPTER VII

THE PURITAN ERA AND ITS LITERATURE

[From 458 B.C. onwards]

Retrospect and New Foothold

IN THE foregoing chapter, dealing with the literary fruits of the exile, we have traced the course of prophecy, its most timely and characteristic product, beyond the limits of the return, to the time of Ezra the scribe, about eighty years after the recolonizing of the Holy Land. Here it reaches a point where we can glance back at the mighty prophetic movement as a whole.[1] Rising at the menace of Israel's political doom, in the times of Joel, Amos, and Hosea, that movement has kept pace with the whole period of Israel's peril, suspense, break-up, and eventual restoration; faithfully interpreting it all as in the unfolding will and purpose of God, keeping the people's mind true to its duties and destinies; reaching its nodes of greatest stress and immediacy with Isaiah of Jerusalem, Jeremiah, and the Second Isaiah; forging onward in fervor and certitude toward a large Messianic future; then, after the return, gradually subsiding as the people's enthusiasm became chilled and disillusioned; going out finally in spasms of occasional warning and broken gleams of an apocalyptic new order. One can imagine that the Book of Malachi, sternly severe as it was, got little response in his generation, except from the handful of devout-minded souls (cf. Mal. iii, 16–18) in whom the spirit of a nobler order was still alive. That prophet was indeed sensible that his word was a final

[1] For the general map of the prophetic movement, sketched from its beginning forward, see above, pp. 133–137.

or rather pausing message to his people, a virtual postponement of prophecy to a more rewarding season. And later, probably about when the Daniel apocalypse was due, there came a time when men of religious aspiration were complaining, "We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long" (Psa. lxxiv, 9). Such, broadly speaking, was the curve of rise, culmination, and subsidence of the prophetic strain in the development of Biblical literature. Conceived and maintained by men of lofty vision and faith, whose sole care was that Jehovah's word and will should prevail, it did untold service toward the race's realization of its noble mission and destiny.

And its decline was not in failure or doubt, but in quiescence and pause, waiting, so to speak, until other strains could catch up with it. It was always a specialized utterance. As the literature of spiritual ideal and insight it had dealt with the crises and emergencies of the nation's experience.[1] Hence its high plane of intensity; its formula of warrant "Thus saith Jehovah," fitting its impassioned appeals to high surges of zeal and resolve. It was a literature dynamic, inspirational.

As such, however, prophecy was less mindful of the static levels of an established cultus and government, and of the cultural needs of domestic and individual life. Hence its natural subsidence when the restored nation's affairs had become uniform and prosaic, — that equable progress whose annals are dull.[2] It was giving place to a cultural régime of more pervasive and educative character. Accordingly, the ensuing period was one during which the people's response was more to the activities of scribes and priests and rabbis, who functioned as scholars, magistrates, and religious teachers.

[1] See above, pp. 127–129.

[2] "Happy the people whose annals are blank in history books." — MONTESQUIEU, quoted by Carlyle.

Its historical remains from Nehemiah's time onward are very scanty. One judges its tone and mood partly by hints and inferences drawn from contemporary productions and partly by the literary situation at the coming of Jesus. It has been called, too indiscriminately I think, "the night of legalism." A more fitting name, suggestive of an analogous period in modern religious history, is The Puritan Era.

The literature that gave character and color to this era calls now for consideration.

I. The Initiative from Babylon

The Dearth of Learning in Jerusalem

It does not appear that when the Jewish people went back from Chaldean exile to the homeland they had with them any considerable number of scholars and writers. The situation was not favorable to refinement of culture. Those who returned were virtually settlers and pioneers, whose energies must be employed in building homes and reclaiming the land. A spirit of piety and enthusiasm, roused by prophetic assurance, had brought them there, but this in itself was a slender support against the trials and disillusions they must encounter. Two generations of captivity in a strange land, without autonomy or methodical cultus, had impoverished their civic and religious thinking. We see this reflected in the moral conditions that Haggai and Zechariah recognized in their efforts to get the Temple rebuilt. It was a relatively primitive state of society, wherein the leaders were careless of duty and the priest's robes were dirty (cf. Zech. iii, 3). Nor, as it would seem, did matters greatly improve after the Temple was dedicated. It was not furnished with the robust devotion and loyalty that a recovered sanctuary service ought to have. This we see in the faithless and insincere conditions that Malachi found at about the time of Ezra's arrival from Babylon. The people needed a new access of religious faith

indeed, but also they needed a sounder infusion of thought and learning from their inherited store of tradition and instruction. They were not living up to their history and heritage.

I

Post-Exilic Men of Letters and their Work. From this unsatisfactory state of things in the Holy Land we return now to consider the situation of the Jewish communities still remaining in Chaldea and Persia. They constituted, as we have seen,[1] the great majority of the people: the men of age and distinction and property and culture who were not so well fitted for the pioneer work of recolonizing, and whom in the large sense we recognize as the Jews of the Dispersion. It is to the representative thinkers and scholars of these communities, perhaps to guilds of these, that we are to look for the principal literary activity of the time beginning with the exile and continuing till perhaps a century or so after the return.

Prophecy Succeeded by Scholarship

From the time of the situation disclosed in Ezekiel and Second Isaiah onward the history of the Jews who still remained in Chaldea and Persia is silent. We can judge of its tenor only by some of its literary effects. As we have seen, the interest of the few salient stages known to us — the hopeful return, the hardships of recolonizing the homeland, and the labor of a poverty-stricken people to rebuild their Temple — is transferred to Jerusalem. But this was the history of an essentially religious movement responding to the enthusiasm of prophets and priests. Its impulsion came rather from an imagined future than from a storied past, and the character of its devotees corresponded. The more intellectual and scholarly element of the nation remained in the land of their exile; for this had become to them an adopted home

[1] See above, p. 327.

where they could cultivate their ideals as well as in the shadow of the Temple. So long deprived of a sanctuary, they had come in their cultus to depend less on ritualistic forms and more on the spirit. A few simple customs, such as private and communal prayer, the observance of the Sabbath, and memorial fasting, sufficed them as well in neighborhood synagogues as in a centralized Temple. The development of the synagogue service, accordingly, is a characteristic feature of the Jews of the Dispersion.

In all this silent experience their most valuable possession was the rich deposit of literature, historic and prophetic, which they had inherited from their fathers. To this they turned with a zest and reverence that they had never known before. It embodied the principles and ideals that had separated them from the mass of humanity and made them a nation. Its elements, well ingrained by their prophetically guided history, made them consciously superior, in a spiritual sense, to the highly civilized people among whom their lot was cast. This consciousness was the motive power of their unity and redemption. Accordingly, the regards of their men of insight and letters were turned to the work of collecting, coördinating, revising, and supplementing the fund of national literature which their past had bequeathed to them. It is this which we note as the dominant literary activity of the exile period in Chaldea; this it was which called together and unified their literature and made them the people of a book.

Lines of Literary Cleavage

What shape this fund of the nation's literature was in, when from its depositary in the Temple or in private keeping it was hastily gathered up and carried, probably with the first deportation, into the land of captivity, we do not know, but we can reasonably conjecture. It was doubtless in separate rolls, sheets, and tablets; some in fairly complete form, some in memoranda or fugitive collections; rudely classified, if at all; archives,

historical annals, genealogies, laws and ordinances, Temple psalms and songs, proverbs, and the utterances of the literary prophets, all more or less jumbled together, and still doubtless, as they had been, in the keeping of the clergy or priests. And the clergy, with no official work of the altar to do, turned to the study of their civic and religious archives, and became scribes or scholars. So, as during the captivity prophecy culminated and later subsided, scholarship, gradually taking its place, grew in vigor and solidity and became a dominant achievement of the men of leading. To this not only their enforced leisure but the atmosphere of a cultured land would contribute. They could estimate their literary accumulations in a new light.

There were naturally two lines of cleavage in the work undertaken by these unnamed scholars: one selecting the works adapted to the present needs in Chaldea, and of the Dispersion in general; the other collecting and codifying the works adapted to the permanent and as it were constitutional needs of the people who had returned to the homeland to set up their capital anew.

1. It would naturally begin, I think, with their store of prophecies, whose truth and sanity had been so vindicated by the event of fulfillment and restoration. All the extant work of the literary prophets, as we have seen, had centered about this crisis of national break-up and exile; and its vitality would be evident now. It had become classic. Accordingly, with the work of Jeremiah and Ezekiel still fresh in mind as a nucleus, these scholars would bring together, arrange, and perhaps touch up and fill out the earlier remains. The last two chapters of Jeremiah — to mention only one example — are generally regarded as a case in point; and we have seen how grandly the unknown Second Isaiah supplemented the torso left by Isaiah son of Amoz, making it a finished vision covering virtually the whole prophetic period. So it

The Line of Vindicated Prophecy

would fare also with Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, for the Judean state; nor would they omit Hosea and Amos for the still earlier northern kingdom; for the prophecy of Isaiah (cf. Isa. xi, 11–13) and later of Ezekiel (cf. Ezek. xxxvii, 15–28) had come true, and the whole Israelitish race was again united in spirit. In the feeling of the prophets, indeed, it had never been divided; their ultimate mission was one.

It was the body of collected prophecy, not unlikely, that became the favorite reading matter of the Jews of the Dispersion and of the outlying districts of Palestine, in the scattered communities where in course of time synagogues were erected in which both for religious service and popular education Scripture was read and cherished. Such communities had less use, relatively, for such rules and rituals as in the Pentateuch are associated with Temple and clergy, and more relative regard for the fervid ideals of the prophets, with their more spacious interpretation of life. Such differentiation of literary interests would produce its own type of emphasis and sentiment. We see the effect of this different attitude in the time of Jesus' ministry, when he and his Galilean disciples were imbued with prophetic ideas, while the Jews of the capital, with whom they came in contact, had become hard and intolerant in their narrow regard for the law of Moses and the usages of ecclesiasticism.

The Line of Historical Evolution

2. Here, however, we must take renewed note of the distinctive Hebrew genius. In the mind of the Jewish scholars prophecy was intimately involved in history; history — *their* history at least — was essentially prophetic.[1] It was luminous with the mind and purpose of Jehovah. They regarded their greatest lawgiver as their greatest prophet (cf. Deut. xxxiv, 10); they

[1] For remarks on the Hebrew genius for history and prophecy, as compared especially with the Greek genius for philosophy, see above, pp. 37–39.

accepted the prophets as interpreters of events (cf. Amos iii, 7); and when later their body of literature assumed the form of a canon the collection of books narrating the nation's history (Joshua to Second Kings) was counted as prophecy, being called "the earlier prophets" (*n'bhi'im r'shonim*), while the prophets proper (Isaiah to Malachi) were called "the later prophets" (*n'bhi'im aḥaronim*). This shows how liberally and honorably the idea of prophecy was construed. Nor were the prophets proper ranked as mere augurs and diviners, like the professional fortune tellers of other nations; such, in fact, came to discredit and shame (cf. Jer. xxvii, 9; Zech. xiii, 3–5); rather, they were regarded as spokesmen of Jehovah, interpreting the meaning and tendencies of historical conditions and events. As a recent writer has put it, "Rightly regarded, prophecy is the statement of eternal truth in a form suited to an immediate occasion."[1] So intimate, in the matured scholarly view, was the blending of prophecy and history; so reverent the spirit accorded to both.

As such interpreters the prophets proper had their degree of authority, an authority adequate for present faith and stimulus; but the history itself, with its developed laws and proved lessons, came to have an authority still greater. It was the authority of fact illuminated by values, the values of a divinely guided evolution. Such liberal estimate of the past led these old-time scholars to deal fairly, rigidly indeed, with the records in their hands. In compiling the annals of their leaders, judges, and kings they did not take liberties with their historical material; did not twist or deny its statements. They had gathered it from many sources documentary and traditional, ranging from state archives to personal and family narratives, and they were content to set the stories side by side, ignoring the risks of discrepancy and relative authenticity. Hence the impression we get of a

[1] See above, pp. 127, 141. The quotation is from an article by Theodore H. Robinson in *The Interpreter* (July, 1917), p. 137.

thoroughly *honest* history, free from obtrusion of the historians' personal notions, and preserving to large degree the contemporary tone and color of its venerable sources. Yet also it is eminently homogeneous, consistent, continuous; and as to literary artistry, its masterly selection of relevant and essential material from so vast and varied a mass is evinced in the fact that it has told the story of a race from prehistoric and patriarchal times through many centuries, from Chaldea to Chaldea again, in a compass which in our day makes up only a section of a single volume. This is no place to go into detail; it is sufficient, in estimating the work of these nameless scholars and scribes, to take note of this general mastery of the historic sense and method.

Law-ordered History the First Claim

As standards of orthodoxy and authority, however, the works of the prophets were not the first to be gathered for the uses of an eventual Scripture canon. The condition of things in the recolonized homeland, already described, called for an initiative of another kind from Babylon. There were other works that had a prior claim; namely, the laws of Moses, embodying the code and constitution of Israel, with the primitive histories that led up to and accompanied them. These seem to have been in more mixed and chaotic condition than the prophecies; in more need therefore of the organizing touch of scholarship. There was more need also of vigor and system in preparing them for renewed use; for the restored community in Jerusalem was growing lax and loose for want of them, and must needs be brought to a sense of their uncompromising authority (cf. Jehovah's warning, Mal. iii, 6). One body, or version, of Mosaic law was already well known: that book of the law which was found in the temple in the time of Josiah, and which we identify with the Book of Deuteronomy.[1] Perhaps also Ezekiel's visionary sketch for the reorganization of the cultus, Ezek. xliv to xlvi, had been

[1] See "The Book Found in the Temple," pp. 220–228 above.

taken back to the homeland for use in starting anew. But the rebuilt Temple with its usages, and the church now in the governance of High Priests, which had replaced the Jewish state, required more articulated and systematized legislation than this Book of Deuteronomy could supply; and Ezekiel's scheme, drawn up largely, it would seem, from his memory of priestly usages, could only be preliminary; the cultus must have more ancient and tested authority than a hasty sketch could give it. To collect and codify the scattered laws of a people must be the work of scholars, and it must take time and study. How many scribes were engaged on this work we do not know, nor how long their researches took; its results appear in the work and influence of one man, Ezra, "a ready scribe in the law of Moses" (Ezra vii, 6), who in 458 B.C., sixty years after the dedication of the rebuilt Temple, appeared in Jerusalem with the completed law of Moses in his hand. "For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances" (Ezra vii, 10).

II

Ezra: Scribe and Scholar. Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem from Babylon was in many ways auspicious. Of priestly lineage direct from Aaron, he seems from his eminent learning and piety to have obtained the esteem of King Artaxerxes, who by royal letter authorized him to act as special lawgiver and magistrate, with power both to promulgate and enforce the law of his God and of the king. There accompanied him about fifteen hundred like-minded men, volunteers from leading priestly and Levitical families, who in the troublous years that ensued proved a strong nucleus and support in the reformed doctrines and customs thus introduced from Babylon. They took with them a handsome subsidy of gold and silver for the maintenance

of Temple services and other objects. Such a reënforcement from their more well-to-do brethren was no small boon, both material and cultural, to the poverty-straitened residents of the capital; and it was received with suitable thanksgiving and honor (Ezra vii, viii).

Puritan Spirit in Outbreak and Stern Inquisition

Arrived in Jerusalem, Ezra's essentially Puritan spirit was not tardy in making itself felt. One of the truest and stanchest men of all Hebrew history, he yet had the defects of his qualities. With all his devotion to sacred learning, having the severe mind of the scholar, he had therewith the unbending strictness, not to say bigotry, of the trained specialist. He could tolerate no deviation from the straight line of his grounded convictions, nor had he withal the tact to deal graciously with men of other opinions. And his first discovery of conditions in Jerusalem invaded — outraged as he conceived — the very central tenet of his reforming creed. It was the discovery of the mixed marriages, marriages with women of alien and idolatrous nations, which had become ominously prevalent in the priestly and Levite classes. We have noted how these were denounced by Malachi. The dramatic scene in which he deals with this alarming discovery is almost like an uncontrolled outbreak of frenzied fanaticism (Ezra ix). The crowd who had assembled, grieved at his strange demeanor and stung by a vague sense of guilt, were at first easily pliant to his imperious will. He lost no time in exacting from them an oath to put away their foreign wives; but later, on account of this and perhaps other arbitrary acts of his,[1] a sullen reaction set in which for a time apparently ended his active influence, costing him twelve years of silent waiting before, availing himself of the

[1] If Ezra iv, which seems out of place and connection, narrates an event of this period, it would seem that he attempted to rebuild the city walls; an attempt frustrated by his enemies' remonstrance to King Artaxerxes, which of course brought him into discredit. For an excellent history of all this complicated period, see Hunter, "After the Exile," Vol. II.

patronage of Nehemiah, he could bring his completed law-book to the attention of the people.[1] Nor did it transpire, when at length he executed his authorized commission, that his law had given him clear and positive warrant for such drastic measures. He had allowed his zeal for Jewish exclusiveness and pride and purity of race to outrun his learning. But, as we shall see, he was not the man to give up his great call of duty.

The Birthday of Judaism

At length, however, his opportunity came. It is not our province to deal with the civil history of the Jews except so far as it furnishes a background for the literature. Suffice it to say, the coming of Nehemiah as governor and the successful rebuilding of the city walls intervened. Doubtless Ezra's season of obscurity was by no means a season of inactivity. He had his Chaldean colleagues with him; he was strengthening his plans and approaches; perhaps also he was learning to adopt a more tempered and conciliatory behavior; nor can we omit to mention that Nehemiah, his stanch friend and supporter, supplied the tact and management of men that he lacked. At any rate, when after twelve silent years he came out of his retirement to read his book of the Mosaic law, it was at the respectful call of the assembled people (Neh. viii, 1). Perhaps also in this lean time, when prospects were beginning to brighten, the old prophecy of Amos was coming true: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah" (Amos viii, 11). The call to Ezra was significant of much in the more wholesome attitude of the people toward the seasoned and steadying ideas of life, ideas not dependent on violent and transitory waves of emotion or fanaticism.

[1] This we infer from the fact that nothing more is said of Ezra until Nehemiah, coming as governor, has completed the repair of the city walls and gates; cf. Neh. viii, 1.

The day of the year 444 B.C. on which, before a great multitude of princes, priests, and people, Ezra "stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose" (Neh. viii, 4) and read from his long-studied book of the law, while his able colleagues aided him by reading distinctly (literally, interpretatively) and giving the sense, "so that they understood the reading" (viii, 8), has been aptly named "the birthday of Judaism." It was the initiation of that cultural period, extending to the advent of Christianity, during which the Jewish mind, in its narrowness and its breadth, its tenacity and its intensity, was coming progressively to its own. This fact makes the eighth chapter of Nehemiah one of the most notable chapters in the annals of Biblical literature. As the people listened, realizing with every responsive "Amen, Amen" how grievously they had neglected and despised the lessons of their past, they were at first disposed to weep. But their wise governor Nehemiah, under whom they had rebuilt their walls and reorganized their commonwealth, put a prompt check on this untimely sadness. "This day," said he, "is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. . . . Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord, neither be ye grieved: for the joy of Jehovah is your strength" (viii, 9, 10). These noble words strike the needed keynote of the new Judaism here coming to birth. The nation had too long clung to the benumbing grief which under the form of fasting had become an ordained memorial of its hated captivity and subjection. The prophet Zechariah had already urged its discontinuance, or rather its conversion into expressions of generosity and fellowship (Zech. vii, 4–10; viii, 18, 19). It had been the mark of the nation's weakness and self-distrust. This exhortation of Nehemiah's, on the other hand, gives the note of returning self-respect; and strength, the strength of a

newborn faith, is in it. The next day this "joy of Jehovah" was expressed in spontaneous form. Having found in their continued reading the ordinance of the Feast of Booths, the old-time joy festival, the people forthwith gathered boughs and branches of trees, erected their booths, and for seven days kept the feast as it had not been kept since the time of Joshua the son of Nun (viii, 13–18). Every day, too, the law was read, as most truly a part of the feast.

Sequel and Fruitage of Ezra's Scholarship

This "birthday of Judaism" was of course only a birthday, and the hazardous period of infancy and youth must naturally follow. Of this, with its vicissitudes of good and bad faith, its lapses from Puritan standards, its strifes of classes and parties, its secret evasions of the prescribed order, it is not our part here to speak; a masterly account of it may be found in Mr. Hunter's book.[1] Ezra disappears again; the fluctuations of policy and sentiment go on without him; and it seems not unlikely that he died with a sense of personal neglect and failure. But his work and influence clung and grew; since Moses the most vital and fundamental element in all Judaism. Without his judicious, constructive, scholarly handling, the body of Mosaic statutes and ordinances might have remained scattered and uncoördinate, *disjecta membra* of a code, or buried in forgotten archives. Without his selective and organizing genius the intimate interactions of history and divine instruction (*torah*)[2] would have missed their adequate notice and record. Yet his mind was essentially that of the annalist and scribe; not creative except in the editorial sense. We cannot certainly point to any inventive composition of his, like that of the prophets and

[1] See above, p. 339, footnote.

[2] It is to be noted that the Hebrew word *torah*, which we too narrowly translate "law," has not with the Jews the formal and magisterial sense that we associate with the term; rather it is "instruction," "direction," with the sense of personal impartation and elucidation.

sages. But it was to this more pedestrian scribal work that the Jewish mind was now tending; it responded eagerly to such methods as his. Ezra became accordingly, in influence if not in person, the founder of the Jewish order of *sopherim*, or scribes; men who in the next two centuries became a dominant class in the Jewish state, oral interpreters and teachers of the law, the men whom, with the Pharisees, we find in the New Testament "sitting on Moses' seat" (cf. Matt. xxiii) and busied with legal questions. There is a Talmudic tradition — not historically verifiable — of a "Great Synagogue" of scribes, scholars, and clergy, whose first president was Ezra, and whose avowed function in the cultural life of Israel was briefly summed up in three prescripts: "Be careful in pronouncing judgment; make many disciples; set a hedge about the law."[1] One may be uncertain about the formal establishing of such a "Great Synagogue" — like a sort of Westminster Assembly — so soon after Ezra's advent in Jerusalem; but the cultural object proposed in these rabbinical precepts became a very prominent element of the new Judaism, its spirit surviving unabated to this day. This noble manual of instruction, brought so timely out of the storied past, must thenceforth, as was felt, be cherished, elucidated, made familiar to all classes, yet reverently hedged about, almost like an object of worship, lest any profanation or fault be suffered to invade it. Such at least was the pious yet rigid treatment of it, as centuries went on, at the hands of scribes, priests, and rabbis. With this as their main textbook, these learned orders became the practical arbiters of Judaism. By such means Ezra, the "ready scribe in the law of Moses," came to rank as the second great lawgiver of the nation, the man whose scholarship made the ancient statutes viable for later conditions of religion and life.

[1] Hunter, "After the Exile," Vol. II, p. 293.

II. Legalism and its Austerities

The Literary Horizon Seemingly Contracts

It will be remembered that the Jewish people, with whose literary history our Book II is dealing, are called "The People of a Book,"[1] — the book in question being the Old Testament Scripture as a whole. Up to the time of the scribes the materials for that book had been accumulating, in the more or less occasional utterances of prophets, poets, and sages; but toward the organic fusion of these into the unity of a canon, or library,[2] no definite steps had yet been taken. In the stage of Biblical development to which we have now reached the reason for this is apparent. Ezra's completed law of Moses, which both for its chronological significance and its paramount importance must needs stand at the head of such a canon, had just come to its own. Its speedy effect was, so to say, to precipitate and crystallize into form the Jewish religion and thought. Thenceforth its body of priestly and civic ordinances preëmpted the main regard of the cultured classes, so that its austere influence drew in the Jewish mind from its prophetic aspirations and destinies to a Puritanic régime of ecclesiastical law. It is to the somber dominance of this influence, prevailing through centuries of the scanty history from the times of Ezra and Nehemiah onward, that by modern scholars the name has been given, "the night of legalism."

I

The Jewish Mind and Mood. Note here that we are using the term "Jewish." We have reached the point where this distinctively applies. It is the Jew, the representative of the leading tribe, rather than the more liberal Israelite or the more primitive Hebrew that we have mainly in mind; for we have entered the atmosphere of matured and self-sufficient

[1] See above, pp. 251–253. [2] As outlined above, pp. 12–20.

Judaism, with its definitive qualities good and bad. Do not infer, however, that these qualities are engendered by the discipline of this imported law. A fair consideration of the noble Mosaic code with its attendant history disproves this. We must take into account the native Jewish mind and mood, as we have already noted its tendencies, and as events wrought to determine its attitude.

As Shaped by Conflicts and Events

Some very concrete strokes of national experience, in fact, tended to set and harden the mood of the Jewish clergy in their zealous enforcement of scribal law. Chief among these, perhaps, the first at least, was the conflict rising out of the marriage situation. Malachi, in prophetic vein, had scored the Jewish nobility for their treachery in deserting the wives of their youth for the sake of desirable foreign alliances (Mal. ii, 10–16).[1] Ezra, coming with the stern ideas of racial purity engendered in an alien land, began his work by exacting an oath from priests and Levites to put away their foreign wives (Ezra x, 5–17). Nehemiah, coming back from Babylon for his second term as governor (cf. Neh. xiii, 6), added his civil power to clear the Temple courts of all foreign taint, an act at the bottom of which lay numerous cases of marriage with Gentiles, notably such an alliance with a member of the High Priestly family (Neh. xiii, 1–9; 23–31). A son of the High Priest, who was son-in-law to Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, he chased from his presence (Neh. xiii, 28). The sequel is not told in Scripture; but from Josephus[2] we learn that the degraded priest, with a considerable following of priests and Levites who had married Gentile women, escaped to Samaria, where his father-in-law enabled him to set up a rival Temple and worship on Mount Gerizim, — the cultus to which the woman of Samaria

[1] See above, p. 365.

[2] Josephus, "Antiquities," xi, 8, 2; Hunter, "After the Exile," Vol. II, chap. xv.

belonged (John iv, 20–22) and the remnants of which exist to this day. This withdrawal of priests greatly confirmed the tendency of the Jews to racial exclusiveness and pride. All this reacted on the temper of leaders and people, enhancing their zealous regard for the law of Moses; it increased also a tendency, already native to the Jewish mind, to make their cultus too mechanical and meticulous, as we see by the way the law was handled by the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time. A state of things this, very different from the friendliness to strangers and sojourners enjoined in this very law itself (cf. Lev. xix, 33; Num. xv, 14–16; Deut. x, 18, 19); different too from the ideal urged by the prophets that Israel should be a people hospitable, beloved, attractive.[1] The larger Israel spoke in these; it is Judaism that speaks now in tones of a religion that is becoming congealed in rites and ceremonies and that is hardening into orthodoxy, exclusiveness, intolerance.

As Creating an Atmosphere of Legalism

Not only in the austere circles of the Temple clergy and the scribes but among the people at large this matured spirit of Judaism produced momentous effects both good and bad. To name this I have chosen a modern term; the thing was just as real and pervasive in ancient times as it is to-day. It is "what the novelists call atmosphere, that emotional and social fluid which holds the separate social atoms in solution."[2] Not only in word and oath but in unforced opinion and sentiment the general response to Ezra's Mosaic law was hearty, eager, loyal. Further, this popular response seems to have been not to something entirely new, for the people recognized and reverenced it as the genuine law of Moses, but as something which, till then only vaguely apprehended, had now come to common appreciation and understanding. It is hard to see how this remarkable effect

[1] Cf. above, pp. 329, 330.

[2] Quoted from a recent literary review.

could have been brought about unless we adopt some such explanation as that urged by Professor Édouard Naville,[1] who holds that Ezra's work as "a ready scribe in the law of Moses" was to translate (or transcribe) the Mosaic statutes from the cuneiform in which they were originally written into the literary language of Palestine, which was Aramaic, and that the school of the scribes, his helpers, gave oral interpretations in the Judaic speech, the dialect of Jerusalem and its environs. This seems borne out by the manner in which the law was read and interpreted, Neh. viii, 4 to 8, where of the scribes who accompanied Ezra it is said, "They read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly (literally, "with an interpretation"), and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading" (Neh. viii, 8). If his view is correct, we have here a striking parallel to what took place in Germany by Luther's translation of the Bible and in England by the translations culminating in the King James version. The Bible, by being translated into every-day language, was made a common people's book, and the popular response followed. So it seems to have been in the years following Ezra. The law was, as it were, released from its formal and academic prison and through the work of the scribes became a popular educative factor. It is no wonder then that it created an atmosphere of legalism which permeated to all classes. The people breathed and thought and felt in the idiom of *torah*, of instruction, of law.

Do not imagine this atmosphere of legalism as a medium merely of pedantry and formal dignity and dreary scribal distinctions. There was plenty of this, to be sure, especially

[1] Professor Naville's views, with the arguments by which they are set forth, are given in "The Text of the Old Testament," being the Schweich lectures for 1915. The part relating more especially to Ezra's services and influence begins at page 65, but as Professor Naville goes over the whole field from the beginning it is needless to say his book necessitates an entire revision of the current ideas of the Higher Criticism relating to the origin of the early Old Testament writings.

in the academic and magisterial circles, and it produced both its dogmatisms and its reactions. But, as we have seen, the word *torah*, which our word "law" only inadequately renders, had a much more genial and liberal connotation; it meant a prime asset of the inner life, round every aspect of which (as seen in its wealth of synonyms) the piety and affections of the people could cluster. "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am Jehovah" (Lev. xviii, 5; cf. Ezek. xx, 11; Rom. x, 5; Gal. iii, 12), — such was its essential sanction, felt by all. It was accepted not only as the law of the Temple but as the law of the heart. This we can see from the way it entered into the Hebrew sacred poetry: into such Psalms as the first, which describes the blessedness of the godly observer; as the nineteenth, which sets its inwardness side by side with the energizing power of the sun and the heavens; as the one hundred and nineteenth, an elaborate acrostic poem one hundred and seventy-six verses long, every one of which contains, with devout ascriptions of praise, some synonym for the divinely given *torah*. Such was its good influence, far outweighing its austerities. We are not to judge its pervasive effects merely by the way it was handled by the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time. Its legalism was to a fundamental degree the legalism of something that was felt to be "holy and just and good" (cf. Rom. vii, 12).

Enter, the Pedagogue

NOTE. One can see how thoroughly the spirit of a devout legalism had permeated the finer mind of the people by noting the wealth of synonyms introduced into this Psalm cxix. The acrostic form of this Psalm, being apparently the form adopted by Hebrew writers for especially weighty and finished verse, is of course very characteristic; but even more intimately so is the continual recurrence of the words "law," "testimonies," "precepts," "statutes," "commandments," "word," "judgments," "ordinances," all these attributed directly to the mind of God.

The zeal and diligence of scribes and rabbis through this Puritan era to make the law viable prompts to a further remark about its ultimate function. They builded better than they knew. We have seen how prophecy, ranging through conditions and crises to come, focused in a Personage, who was to be a Prince of peace, an Ensign of the peoples, a Davidic Shepherd and King, yet a self-sacrificed Servant of Jehovah, at whom kings would shut their mouth. To point the way to him was the supreme function of prophecy. What of the supreme function of law? Was it the end of ordered life, or a means to the end? Its use at the hands of its multitude of teachers as a working-tool for righteousness suggests the answer, which, indeed, in another way coincides with the grand solution of prophecy. Law is essentially unfinal, — not an end but a means. Teachers of rules and bans are not for the adult and self-directive but for minors and immature, — for such as have not reached the ripeness of character prophesied by Jeremiah (cf. Jer. xxxi, 34). St. Paul, whose interpretation of the function of law was fundamental, takes this view of it. "The law," he says, "is become our tutor — our pedagogue — to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"; that is, cease to be minors and schoolboys, having reached our majority in self-mastery (Gal. iii, 24; cf. iv, 1–5; Eph. iv, 13, 14). With him, of course, that means Christian inwardness and adultness. Thus in the great Biblical movement law and prophecy are set to a wonderful teamwork looking to the same end. And the creation of a diffused atmosphere, a pervasive sentiment and veneration, by which men are subconsciously controlled, is its capital contribution to the promotion of this end. So the atmosphere of legalism, in this good sense, is a healthy atmosphere, as far as it goes.

With this estimate of Judaism duly in mind, we are ready to consider the literature characteristic of what we have called

the Puritan era. Let us begin with its main literary factor, which, though not the creation of this era, is its most influential heritage.

II

The Completed Pentateuch. As designating the book that Ezra brought up with him from Babylon, we have thus far assumed merely the Biblical name, "the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel" (cf. Neh. viii, 1). It was indeed that, but it was more. The law in its more specific sense, as being the first element applied to conditions in Jerusalem, was at once recognized as the book's characterizing feature. But along with its various codes (for there were several) were given detailed accounts of its origin, motive, and occasion, a spacious historical setting in fact, beginning with primitive and patriarchal times and extending continuously to the death of Moses. In other words, it is quite certain that Ezra's book was the completed Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, which the Jews later called "the five fifths of the law."

NOTE. The name "Pentateuch" (from Greek *penta*, *pente*, "five," and *teuchos*, lit. "tool" or "implement," later "book"), which was adopted by Christian scholars as early as Tertullian and Origen, merely recognizes the first five books of the Bible as the Jews did in their "five fifths of the law." The word has been supplanted in modern critical scholarship by the term "Hexateuch" (*hex*, *hexa*), the Book of Joshua being added on account of its source relations, similar to those of the Pentateuch. For the legal and literary relations, however, the five-book division, ending with the completed Law and the death of the great Lawgiver and Prophet, yields a more natural and logical classification.

The book that Ezra brought from Babylon, functioning as the completed Law of Moses, was not so much a new book as a new edition adapted to new needs and uses. From unknown periods its component parts had been in the making; had responded in their times to contemporary

conditions and produced contemporary effects. That is why its new effect in Ezra's time was so pronounced and immediate. It struck, so to speak, the native chord of Judaism, in harmony with its deep national spirit and idea. Hence its power to act from that time forth as an organic whole, a potent and unitary factor in the cultural life of the Jews.

Question of Sources and Authorship

The evident fact, however, that its subject matter is so composite, with peculiar traits of style differentiating its various parts, has in modern times wrought to obscure its unitary and homogeneous effect. The Pentateuch problem, with its prevailing assumption that Moses was not the author of any part of it, has in his place put numerous theories and conjectures of sources, dates, authors, redactors, and the like, theories the exploitation of which has produced a prodigious amount of ink-shed. This problem was the first and perhaps greatest battleground of the so-called Higher Criticism; for which reason we cannot well evade it, though it concerns us only indirectly. Some of its results will remain, whether they will bulk so large as once seemed likely or not. Now that the battle has passed on to other issues we need only remark here that it is rather an academic than a vital matter, dealing with externalities of the like of which the people of Ezra's time, to whom the completed Law first came, had not the smallest heed or conception. To them this history, with its venerable covenants and its motived ordinances, was as if the voice of the great Lawgiver himself were sounding across the centuries to them. Accordingly their book meant infinitely more to them than if they had been critically minded. They thought and acted *as if* their ancient records were authentic. It did not occur to them to call things in question.

Nor had it so occurred to Ezra. So far as appears, his work was not creative and original but editorial, the work of the scholar and scribe. In dealing with his composite

material his was the genius of selection, coördination, proportion, and on the whole we cannot forbear to call it masterly. It is his distinction to have unearthed and assembled these divers deposits of story, genealogy, ritual, statistic, and statute, and to have fused them together into a single continuous narrative, a motived and organized history. Of this work no trait is more conspicuous than his conscientious fidelity to the integrity of his sources, his care to reproduce the ancient writings just as they were, without attempting to reconcile discrepancies or determine degrees of authenticity. That is why they preserve their old-time flavor, why, indeed, modern students can dissect them at all.

NOTE. Several general subjects relating to the formative period of the Biblical literature, already discussed, derive their significance for the most part from the stories of the Pentateuch. How that literature reflects the genius of a specially gifted race we have considered, pp. 31–33. What inherited fund of ideas the Israelites had on their entrance to Canaan we have traced in outline, pp. 46–56. What main lines of source story, with their alleged elements of folk tale, myth, and legend, are held by modern scholars to underlie the early Biblical narratives, we have discussed, pp. 109–123. See also pp. 70, 71.

A Twofold Strain Merged in One

Without going into the conjectural minutiæ of the Pentateuch problem we may note two strains of literary treatment rather intimately blended together yet quite clearly separable. These are largely represented, especially before the deliverance from Egypt, in the different elements of source story already outlined.[1] In the first, which flows along in artless and limpid personal narrative, we trace the so-called Jehovistic and Elohistic elements, which for our purpose may be regarded as one underlying tissue. In the second, wherein the treatment is more formal and systematic, we trace the so-called Priestly and Deuteronomic elements, which, true to the scholarly impulse, are concerned with ordered historical annals,

[1] See above, pp. 109–114.

with their scribal framework of chronology, genealogy, tabulation, and the like. The difference between these two lines of treatment doubtless goes back to their respective derivations from oral and written sources, the latter probably being largely cuneiform, as was the ancient manner of permanent record.

NOTE. For remarks on the distinction between the spoken and the written elements of Biblical tradition, see above, pp. 13–16. An outline sketch of the Pentateuch story is given above, on pages 108, 109.

Let us note, in some leading features of these two strains, how they interact with each other to form the literary tissue identified with the mind of Moses.

Pre-Mosaic Web of Personal Story

In the underlying current of J and E narratives leading up to the covenant at Sinai we read the simple ideas of primitive and patriarchal life, before the period of organic law and cultus was inaugurated, and while as yet human nature was, as it were, exploring the rudiments of custom and character. As to style, this line of narrative, meant for common people, is pitched in the folk tone adapted to the common mind, and as to substance, it moves among domestic and family affairs. Beginning (Gen. ii) with the primitive conjugal pair and their spiritual equipment for life, it narrates their ominous and doubtful outset,

> Life's business being just the terrible choice,

and the lawless conduct, through generations, of their headstrong offspring (Adam to Noah); goes onward through the experiences of a family line steadied and elevated by a high motive and loyalty (Abraham and the patriarchs); until at length we find them, a goodly circle of tribal chiefs, receiving the dying blessing of their father, the grandson of Abraham. Here the web of familiar story is broken for a period of some four hundred and thirty years (cf. Ex. xii, 40), and resumed in a less continuous way. This whole pre-Mosaic line is full of native simplicity and charm, with a haunting

symbolism, as it were a lesson without the pose of the teacher, in every event. I have called it personal because for the most part it centers in notable personages, a succession of ancient worthies, whose lives were pivotal for the normal and wholesome progress of mankind. Not that they are set up as models; their personality is portrayed in its native worth and weakness, its spiritual clearness and dimness, as it reacts on the inner issues of life. In a beadroll of these worthies drawn up by a New Testament writer (see Heb. xi) the common motive and ideal that actuated all their lives, giving a noble meaning to this line of biography, is named faith, and honored as a sturdy confidence and courage which girded them to press onward toward their soul's home (cf. Heb. xi, 14) without attaining, yet without flinching. We need not try to better this interpretation. It names the stimulating and refining power that one feels in reading these stories of the early Semitic world. It is the forward reach of an aspiring humanity.

Merging of Material into Historic System

Closely inwoven from the beginning with this web of personal story, and supplementary of it, are sections and passages in another vein and coloring, to which sections has been given the name of the Priestly element (P). Why so called will appear later. This element bears the marks of the scholar and scribe. Its style is to a degree grave and formal, the finest specimen of it being the first chapter of Genesis, whose sublimity is rather of the subject matter than of the style. Through the rest of this book, however, this element is quite intercalary, supplying as it does the chronological and genealogical framework on which the web of story is unfolded.

In the Book of Genesis

This function of it is made a marked feature. Introduced at the fitting chronological intervals it goes according to a series of "generations" (*toledoth*, lit. "begettings"), which, beginning on the cosmic scale of the heavens and the earth, gradually draw in the created masses

of humanity from their world-wide distribution to the Semitic stock, and to the Hebrew family of which Abraham was the ancestral type; ending with the tribal chiefs begotten by Jacob-Israel, Abraham's distinguished grandson. Thus is laid the foundation, so to say, of the chosen race with which the whole Old Testament has to do; "who are Israelites, whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and" — not to omit the New Testament share — "of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh" (Rom. ix, 4, 5). The whole Biblical basis is laid here.

NOTE. The following is the notation of the concentrative "generations":

Gen. ii, 4. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven."

Gen. v, 1. "This is the book of the generations of Adam."

Gen. vi, 9. "These are the generations of Noah."

Gen. x, 1. "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah."

Gen. xi, 10. "These are the generations of Shem."

Gen. xi, 27. "Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah begat Abram," etc.

Gen. xxv, 12. "Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham."

Gen. xxv, 19. "And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son."

Gen. xxxvi, 1. "Now these are the generations of Esau (the same is Edom)."

Gen. xxxvi, 9. "And these are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir."

Gen. xxxvii, 2. "These are the generations of Jacob."

It will be observed that in two cases collateral lines are introduced (Ishmael, Edom), lines with which the Israelites were closely related in kindred and location. To these may be added, in less formal mention, the sons of Lot, Abraham's nephew, from whom came the Moabites and Ammonites (xix, 37); the line of Nahor, Abraham's brother, whence came Isaac's wife Rebekah (xxii, 20–24); and the sons of Keturah, Abraham's second wife (xxv, 1–4).

The legendary[1] stories of primitives and patriarchs, as told in Genesis, to which the scribal framework of genealogy has given a loose historical sequence, are after all only the vestibule to Ezra's Pentateuch history. As such, however, they are to be fairly reckoned with, not discarded as prehistoric as is the manner of some. Though not of a nature to be verified by official documents, they portray the sterling Hebrew soul, the racial principle from which the later Jewish people derived name and pride of race and persistency of inner freedom (cf. John viii, 33). And this is much; is, indeed, what makes the succeeding history possible. These engaging stories are not to be deemed prehistoric; rather, they throb with the nerve, the vigor, the native spirit of the history that with the deliverance from Egypt is wakened to open movement.

In the Four Succeeding Books

Accordingly, with this pre-Mosaic approach made, the rest of the Pentateuch, from the opening of the Book of Exodus onward, recounts this momentous period of history in a single unbroken narrative. In saying this we do not forget that the Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy belong to the compiler's scheme. In his sense of literary values the moving and vivid elements dear to the story-teller are not dissociable from the clerkly details habitual to the scribe. All is fish that comes to Ezra's priestly and scholarly net. Details of all sorts — genealogy, tribal organization, tabernacle and its furnishing, dedicatory service, itineraries — are catalogued in full wherever they belong in the story; while the story itself, its events and incidents varying in amount and frequency, is always more or less in sight to give the sense of a living background. Thus the law which Ezra brought from Babylon for the uses of his generation was not a cut-and-dried code but the report of a series of law-*givings*, with the circumstances in each case

[1] The warrant for using the word "legendary" may be gathered from what is said above, pp. 118, 119.

narrated; whether by the audible voice of God (cf. Ex. xx, 22), by Jehovah's words engraved on stone tablets (xxxi, 18; xxxiv, 1), by directions received from God and given out from a "tent of meeting" (xxxiii, 7; xxxiv, 34; Lev. i, 1), or by the aged lawgiver's résumé of his people's experience and its avails made as a farewell address and recorded in a book for preservation (Deut. i, 3; xxxi, 24–26). In each case the legislation was made impressive by its occasion, by the circumstances holy, awesome, sublime, which connected the substance of the law with the mind of God. Thus also it came about that the word once given did not become obsolete, that laws and ordinances purporting to have been made for a wilderness people, for nomads with a settled home only in promise and worshiping in a portable sanctuary, were received centuries after as valid for all time and applied to the refined uses of government and Temple. The rugged lesson of their ancient history, accepted by a people to whom history was prophetic, became thenceforth the sacred law of life.

NOTE. It is taken as an assured result of modern criticism that the various stages of the Mosaic Law were the product of a historic development extending through ages of national life; of which development the Book of Deuteronomy represents a stage dating from about Manasseh's time and adapted to conditions prevailing during Josiah's reign, when the book was found in the Temple;[1] and the Book of Leviticus represents the latest stage, a code of legislation designed and adapted to the Priestly uses of the Second Temple and the Jewish hierarchical state. That is to say, by modern scholarship the *origin* of the law is closely connected in time with its publication and administration. How this affects Ezra's estimate of his sources, not to say the good faith of his report, we leave here undiscussed; it is not our problem. His account of the matter, however, with which we are here concerned, derives the Law in its various stages from the masterly mind of Moses, or rather from Jehovah through Moses as mediator; he makes it all, accordingly, the product of that single generation of "trial in the wilderness" when Israel was on the way to Canaan.

[1] See "The Book Found in the Temple," pp. 220–228, above.

The Pentateuchal grouping of the laws seems to fall under the events of three places or occasions, each with its historical situation to correspond.

1. Lev. xxvii, 34. "These are the commandments which Jehovah commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai." Under these is comprised the main body of the first legislation. It begins with the "Ten words," a mnemonic epitome of moral obligation, spoken under very sublime and impressive circumstances from the cloud at Sinai and afterward written upon stone (Ex. xx, 1–21 = Deut. v, 4–23). To these were added, as given to Moses on the same occasion, certain "ordinances" or "judgments" (xxi–xxiii, 19), principles of common law as between "a man and his brother" (cf. Deut. i, 16), which ordinances were solemnly agreed to and ratified by the people (xxiv, 3–8). Following upon this, while Moses was alone with God forty days and forty nights, and Aaron and the priests were waiting outside the cloud, were the directions given for building and furnishing the tabernacle (xxv–xxx) "according to the pattern shown in the mount" (xxv, 40; cf. Heb. viii, 5). Then after the account of the building of the tabernacle has intervened (xxxv–xl), the Levitical ordinances, relating to both worship and civic administration, are given by Moses from the "tent of meeting" (Lev. i–xxvii).

2. Num. xxxvi, 13. "These are the commandments and the ordinances which Jehovah commanded by Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho." This seems to refer to the various ordinances and statutes made for the emergencies of the turbulent wilderness experience of a newly emancipated people during forty years of wandering, laws rising out of new occasions and administered by Moses as magistrate.

3. Deut. i, 1. "These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness." Comprised in the Book of Deuteronomy, these "words" are the wonderful farewell of Moses to his people, in which by a series of hortatory addresses, like the counsels of a father to children, he epitomizes their wilderness history (i–iii); recounts in popular form the statutes and ordinances that condition a loyal and orderly life, in the fear of God and in the wise art of living with others (v–xxx); and ends with a song (xxxii) and a blessing (xxxiii); after which, as bidden by Jehovah, he climbs Mount Nebo and, dying, is buried by Jehovah in an unknown sepulcher (xxxiv, 5, 6).

Thus in this closing book are gathered the legal, historical, and spiritual values of the whole Pentateuch, giving it a noble unity and purpose. It has already been characterized as "one of the most potent and far-reaching books of all time." See above, p. 227.

Let us now try to sum up briefly the permanent significance of this Pentateuch, that literary merger of old-time stories and lessons which, brought from the scribal workshops of Chaldea to Jerusalem, marked by its loyal adoption the birthday of a matured Judaism.[1] What is the source of its power? what its ruling idea?

The Pentateuch as a whole is a pivotal product. On it the literary and spiritual values of the past turn to become values of the future. It deals with the vital elements that lie at the roots of manhood being. That is why it stands at the head of the Hebrew canon; why in the Bible as a record of inner development it should be read first.[2] Drawing from the rude conditions of primeval, patriarchal, and nomadic life, its completion comes to a nation long conversant with the civilized and religious customs of the world. Nor only that: it will be remembered that their prophetic movement was over, with its literary results available, and when their recognition of historical records from Moses onward was at least in the making.[3] Underneath all this Ezra's book lays, as it were, a foundation, supplying the substructure of venerable tradition in its stages of growth from inchoate relations to a law of life adapted to all spiritual and communal needs (cf. Lev. xviii, 5; Ezek. xx, 11; Gal. iii, 12). Viewed in this light the Pentateuch reads less like an austere code of law than like a living epic. It was with some such feeling, I think, that the people of Ezra's time gave fervent allegiance to it. In some ways it was stern and uncompromising; had to be for a people so stiff-necked as the Israelites always were (cf. Ex. xxxiii, 3, 5; Isa. xlviii, 4); in some things too it left unerased the crude and cruel relics of an outworn past (cf., for instance, Deut. vii, 1, 2; xx, 17). But through it all runs a felt current of gracious purpose; and over it, felt especially in the culminating book Deuteronomy,

The End in the Beginning

[1] See above, p. 381. [2] Cf. above, p. 20. [3] See above, p. 377.

hovers like a father's benediction the mighty personality of Moses, the most Christlike figure of the Old Testament (cf. Ex. xxxii, 32 ; Num. xii, 3 ; Deut. xxxiv, 10). One can realize this vividly as one reads his words : " Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as Jehovah my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go in to possess it. Keep therefore and do them ; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, ' Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is whensoever we call upon him ? And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day ? " (Deut. iv, 5–8). There was a power in this law, both personal and institutional, which the nation could neither ignore nor outgrow. It came to them as a lure of manhood.

What then was its ruling idea, the nucleal beginning in which lay the power of the end ? We look at its central ordinance, that digest of commandments that can be counted on the ten fingers [1] (the " Ten words," Ex. xx, Deut. v), and at first thought they look like mere prohibitions, what *not* to do. But do they not thereby do human nature the honor of taking for granted that men, the negative barriers removed, will go on to *do* the positive good of their own motion ? That is how Moses seems to regard it when, after his Deuteronomic recounting of the ten words, he goes on to give its spiritual appeal in its attitude toward God. " Hear, O Israel," he says ; " the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might " [2] (Deut. vi, 4). He resolves it into a commandment of love, — a positive

[1] See above, p. 55.

[2] I use here the wording of the Jewish " new translation," 1917.

relation only possible to the inner life. It will be remembered that our Lord, on being asked for the "great commandment," takes this up as the first and then, with hearty approval from his hearer, adds its complement ("like unto it") the commandment of love to neighbor, enlarged to universal application from Leviticus xix, 18: "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"[1] (cf. Matt. xxii, 34–40; Mark xii, 28–31; Luke x, 25–28). Such is the end already germinal in the beginning: the law of love enjoined on man in the magnificent faith that it is *in* him to love. The summary given by Jesus made it a supreme truth of Scripture teaching. "On these two commandments," he said, "the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (Matt. xxii, 40). The response he received, too, acknowledged such love, Godward and manward, as "much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark xii, 33). Nor should we omit St. Paul's tribute to the second table of the law in Romans xiii, 8–10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; love therefore is the fulfilment of the law." Whatever more it does, the positive good will insures the negative abstinence from ill.

NOTE. The germ of this highest reach of law and life is traceable, far back of the commandments, to the first created man, — a truth which has been needlessly obscured by the usurping notion of original sin and its resulting ruin. When God, who is love (1 John iv, 8, 16), created man in His own image, He endowed that likeness with that freedom of intelligent will and choice — a freedom not without tremendous risks (Gen. ii, 16–17) — by which alone his answering love could be genuine; and, as a further promotive, with that conjugal mating in which, by the sweetest and holiest relation, begins the potency of the love of kind (Gen. ii, 18–25). It is an outfit of liberty and union. So the germ and power of the far end was truly resident in that individual being in whom was focused the human species, and thus in the quaint antique phrase is portrayed a beginning full of aptness and help.

[1] See note 2 on previous page.

III

The Later Cultus Literature. The elements of the "twofold strain merged in one" which we have noted in Ezra's Pentateuchal work [1] may, for rough distinction, be called the popular and the clerical; which is to say, the element that reflects personal traits and feelings, and the element that unfolds in religious organization. Of these, many things conspired after Ezra's and Nehemiah's activities to emphasize the latter. Centered at Jerusalem, with the restored Temple at once its capitol, its university, and its cathedral, the Jewish commonwealth was rather a church than a state, its cultural affairs being merged for the most part in the interests of the Levitical hierarchy. The coming of Ezra and his company of kindred scribes (for which latter cf. Neh. viii, 4, 7) opened in effect an era of leadership for the tribe of Levi, — a tribe and leadership essentially clerical. For this ascendancy they could claim a long tradition, confirmed by the literature they brought. The two brothers, it will be remembered, Moses the great prophet and lawgiver and Aaron his priestly colleague and helper, were of this tribe. The whole Pentateuch after Genesis is a history of their activities. Ezra the scribe traced his lineage to Aaron (Ezra vii, 1–5); and when he set out for Jerusalem he was careful to have a strong representation not only of priests but of cultured laymen, "who were teachers," from that tribe (Ezra viii, 15, 16). Arrived at Jerusalem, where matters had been going at loose ends, these Levites, as a kind of major and minor clergy, soon had the cultural affairs of the nation all their own way. The Temple worship and administration were thoroughly organized, with elaborate forms and ceremonies, ordered courses of priestly service, and a prescribed scale of Levitical duties from chief priest to doorkeeper. So far as one can see, the

In the Care of the Clergy

[1] See above, p. 393.

Jewish people, the machinery of church and state in full running order, were content to leave religious thought in the care and control of the Levitical priesthood with its auxiliary orders of rabbis and scribes.

Such clerical ascendancy — monopoly we may not forbear to call it — was bound to have its distinctive impress on the general literary situation. It set the intellectual pace. It was the main factor in creating what I have called the atmosphere of legalism.[1] As such, it had the advantages and the limitations of clericalism. We must not, of course, deny or belittle the former, which for the Jewish mind and temperament were the advantages of a fit staying and saving power. The Jewish genius required its definiteness, its concrete cultus and symbolism. But, just as with clericalism in modern times, we must needs reckon with its limitations. The clerical mind, subdued to its ecclesiastical formulas, was not creative, not flexible and tolerant, not open to large and liberal vision. It tended rather to the stereotyped and established, to rabbinical comment rather than to literary creation. On the whole, then, we cannot regard the era that set in with the birthday of Judaism as greatly conducive to literary light and power. Those spiritual forces went into abeyance with the lapse of the prophetic spirit and, if yet to appear, were called forth by other influences.

Chronicles: the Levitical and Judaic Bluebook

Of this period — which for its dominant legalism we have called the Puritan Era — the most characteristic literary product was a book written about a century and a half after Ezra, and reflecting the cultural attitude of about three hundred years before Christ, or a little later. That book was the Chronicles, — originally written as a single work, and as is thought including also, by the same author, the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah as we have them in the books so named. The Hebrew title of the work, "Events of the Times" (*Dibrê hayyamim*), as

[1] See above, p. 387.

also the Greek designation, "Supplements" (*Paraleipomena*), represents not unfitly its rank and significance in the Biblical library. It aims to give a revised epitome of the nation's history as this presented itself to the modernized mind of a later and more developed cultus. It is evidently a product of the Temple scholarship and the Temple archives. From its undisguised interest in the Levite families and courses, and from its liking for the choral service, it is not unreasonably thought to have been written by a cleric of the minor orders, a scribe, and perhaps a director of the music. That such a person may have been an official of distinction is indicated by the fact that a great many of the Psalms, the hymnody of this Second Temple, are by their titles consigned to the care of "the chief musician." For its final disposal in the Biblical canon the Book of Chronicles, like Ruth and Daniel,[1] underwent a shift of estimate. By the Hebrew compilers it was placed at the very end, in the so-called "writings," as if it were a kind of summary, or perhaps an appendix. In the Greek canon, however, which the modern versions follow, it was placed in the series of historical books, just after the Books of Kings, and read as a parallel history. Read in either order and estimate it is rewarding, from its reflection of the matured Puritan attitude to the past of Jewish history.

Considered as parallel and supplemental to the earlier historical books (Samuel and Kings) this record of the Chronicles merits brief comparison with these; we can get thereby at what is most characteristic in it.

First then, it is natural to ask why, if the Hebrew story was already so well told, this new version of it was evidently deemed necessary. And the answer is that the intervening years had altered the cultural attitude to life, from the simpler-hearted Israelitish, such as had prevailed before the exile, to the more sophisticated Jewish, such as the Levitical

[1] Cf. above, p. 281.

law and the Temple system had developed. One feels the difference in the whole tone of the book. In reading the books of Samuel and Kings, from whose sources Chronicles got its main material, one feels the very form and pressure of the times therein portrayed; one has the sense of a sterling type of religion that relies less on form and prescript than on native piety and faith; and especially one responds to the power and charm of great personalities — Samuel, Saul, David, Jonathan, Elijah, Elisha — men of large prophetic mold. The history reveals itself in the natural color, rugged and sincere, unbiased by later interpretations. Herein the Chronicler differs materially. His personages do not haunt the reader's memory; they are portrayed rather as related to the sanctions or penalties of a religious dispensation. His storied times move across a priestly background. The Chronicles read, in fact, like a history not felt but made, — a piece of scribal work, its moving scenes sharing indiscriminately with bald genealogies and statistics. And this indeed is what they are. They are the work of a writer who, as it would seem, could portray Israel's religious past only in the tone and coloring of organized and orthodox Judaism, — of the Judaism that had become mature and stereotyped since the return from exile. It is as if the Levitical ordinances had always set the cultural pace for the national mind.

Its Distinctive Aim and Tone

In noting this, let us not be unfair to the good traits of the book. It reflects the mind of a nation imbued with a high sense of the awe and sanctity of its religious symbolism. Its law of the sanctuary has become its law of life, — the fit expression of that race "of whom saints, fanatics, and martyrs are made." As a church history the Book of Chronicles is a sincerely religious history. Its literary tone, whenever the author escapes from his interminable lists of names, is eminently reverent and devout, as befits the idiom of the sanctuary. Thus it mirrors the religious standard of its age.

A second question here rising is, If the Chronicler sees his nation's past through so altered a medium, how does this view affect his treatment of historic fact? In general we may answer: He does not take conscious liberties with fact; but neither has he the historian's minute care for accuracy and consistency. He challenges verification by frequent reference to sources presumably available to his readers; sources apparently identical, for the most part, with those from which the material of the Books of Kings was drawn.[1] His method with them is selection of such facts as make for his purpose and letting the rest go, without care for the effect of the omission. On the whole his work does not rise to the historical value of the Books of Kings, though for matters connected with the cultus we should allow for its clerical author's familiarity with Temple traditions and archives, on which he draws for the real inwardness of his essentially religious history.

Its Handling of Historic Fact

We are to remember, however, the comparative restriction of his range and purpose. His history is not so much a rival of the earlier one as a filled-out department of it. Written long after the northern kingdom had ceased to exist, its secular narrative is concerned only with the southern, the kingdom of Judah, or more specifically with the fortunes of the Davidic, which is to say the Judean, dynasty, from its founder David to its last member Zedekiah, under whom the people were deported and made servants "until

[1] This is not saying that he drew directly from the Books of Kings as we have them, but only that the two authors (or schools) drew as they needed from the same repository of sources. Two of the Chronicler's references to authorities, however, are significant. In 2 Chron. xiii, 22, he refers to "the commentary [A. V. "story," Heb. *midrash*] of the prophet Iddo"; and in xxiv, 27, similarly to "the commentary of the book of the Kings." This indicates, what we know otherwise, that in his time there was current a class of literature called in Hebrew *midrash*, whose aim was exposition of the historical and prophetic writings in possession. The whole Book of Chronicles, apart from its abundant statistics, is largely midrashic, — an explanation of history rather than the history itself.

the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. For as long as it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years" (2 Chron. xxxvi, 21). This quoted passage shows the essentially Levitical interpretation that underlies the whole account; it is history in the light of Mosaic law: The secular side, however, is not the writer's main line. He wrote at a time when, as has been described, "Jerusalem had ceased to be the head of an independent state and had become merely 'a municipality governed by a church.'"[1] It is in the church, or in other words the Temple, — its history, its liturgy, its ritual, — that his interest centers. All the facts that make for this are vital to his theme. The genealogies, for instance, and the lists of names with which the narrative abounds, are by no means superfluous; when we note the lion's share devoted to the tribe of Levi, in all its families great and small (1 Chron. vi), and in the disposition of these in the various grades and courses of the priestly and Temple service (ix, 10–34; xv, 1–xvi, 6; xxiii–xxvi), we become aware of his underlying design, to trace, by a kind of clerical succession, the priestly line from the tabernacle days of Moses and Aaron, and the Temple hierarchy from the preliminary organization under David. It will be remembered that in the Books of Kings the ordinances of the first Temple receive very scant attention; one cannot well make out how definite was the relation of the priests and how loyal the allegiance of the people to their heritage of traditional law. It is this that the Chronicler aims to supply; and in doing so he treats the whole Temple function as virtually organized and active from the time when David set up the tent over the recovered ark of God (cf. 1 Chron. xv, xvi). The successive histories of the kings from David onward are told with special emphasis on their relations to the sanctuary and to ritual religion. David's significance as a settled monarch was not in his personal or political character

[1] Chronicles, in The New Century Bible, p. 23.

but in his choosing a site and making elaborate preparations for the Temple that his son was to build (1 Chron. xxi, 18–xxix, 22); Solomon was less notable as the wise and puissant king than as the builder and consecrator of the Temple (2 Chron. iii–viii); Jehoshaphat began his military campaign with a Temple service of fasting and prayer (2 Chron. xx, 1–13); Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for usurping the priest's function (xxvi, 16–21); Hezekiah's great reform, undertaken in the first year of his reign, consisted in opening the Temple which his father Ahaz had closed (cf. xxviii, 24) and reorganizing its festival and sacrificial service (xxix–xxxi); to Josiah's reform, as told in 2 Kings, is added a detailed account of his Temple festival service (xxxv, 1–19). All these supplemental accounts, the data of which, if authentic, could be drawn from Temple archives and statistics, show wherein the Chronicler's historical interest lay, and incidentally its value in the handling of historical fact.

On the whole, while this Book of Chronicles, written at its late day, reflects the added awe and sanctity, and perhaps the deepened sensitiveness to sin, belonging to the atmosphere of an established ritual and liturgical cultus, it is quite lacking in the finer and freer personal elements that give zest and buoyancy to life. That is why I have contrasted to it the personal charm that pervades the earlier history. Its historical judgments are, as it were, official, the professional verdicts of an orthodox clergy. It represents accordingly the mind of a people, or rather of a class, molded to the pattern of a dogmatic religion, with its lack of breadth and prophetic freedom. Its religion is, to a degree, stereotyped and static. We may regard it as perhaps the fullest reflection that the Scripture affords of what we have termed legalism and its austerities. Let us not forget, however, that such seasoned legalism, with its sturdiness, its rich symbolism, its consciousness of the will of

God, was not all austerity. Nor was its product the only literature available in its time. Outside the scholarly and clerical circles the Jewish people had a goodly store of works of quite different tenor, in which their thought could move with more genial freedom.

Ezra: Book of the Puritan Zealot

Before we go on to mention these, however, we must needs give some further consideration to the two books which, as already noted,[1] are thought to have been originally included in the Chronicles, namely, Ezra and Nehemiah. Much of the substance of Ezra has been referred to and used in our study of Ezra as scribe and scholar.[2] We need here only to add something about the book that bears his name, and how it fits into the Biblical plan.

The Book of Ezra is essentially the continuation of the Book of Chronicles. There is no gap between the two. Beginning with the decree of Cyrus's first year, permitting the Jewish exiles to return to their home, the author repeats in full what the Chronicles, quoting at end, left in the middle of a sentence (Ezra i, 1–4; cf. 2 Chron. xxxvi, 22, 23). From this he goes on, in characteristic chronicler style, accompanying his narrative with names, numbers, documents, and statistics, to tell (chaps. i–vi) the story of the return, the setting up of the great altar, and the building of the Temple with its survival of difficulties, until in the year 516 B.C. "the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy" (Ez. vi, 16). Up to this point the history is the priestly account, accurate no doubt as to externals, but conceived in the spirit of more than two centuries later, when the Jewish commonwealth had become a Jewish hierarchy. Its contrast in tone and atmosphere with the writings of Haggai and Zechariah, which deal

[1] See above, p. 404. [2] See section of that topic, pp. 379–384 above.

with the same period, is impressive. The prophets whose enthusiasm had brought about the rebuilding (cf. Ezra v, 1; vi, 14) had predicted a house filled with Jehovah's glory (cf. Hag. ii, 7–9) and a land friendly and attractive to all outside nations (cf. Zech. ii, 11; viii, 20–23). In the Book of Ezra there is no suggestion of this state of things. The compiler, describing only the ceremonial aspects of the event, provides it with a fully organized priesthood and clergy, as if this had survived the captivity intact. "And they set the priests in their divisions," he writes, "and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses" (Ezra vi, 18). Thus he assumes a cultus in complete running order as soon as the Temple service, after seventy years' abeyance, is resumed. All this, as we see, is quite in keeping with the Chronicle history. It reflects a culture wherein the church sense has eclipsed the secular, or, in other words, has developed a full-orbed legalism. And this result must have been the growth of many years of religious and educative discipline.

It is not until fifty-eight years later, however, that Ezra, with his numerous company of men "who were teachers" (viii, 16), appears on the scene, and not until seventy-two years that he actually is called upon to read this "book of Moses" to the people (see Neh. viii). With the seventh chapter the distinctive Ezra narrative begins, telling of the letter of permission he secured from King Artaxerxes, and of his sense of the grace and honor thus done him. At this point the history incorporates the autobiographic notes of Ezra himself; which notes, extending from vii, 27, to ix, 15, give no longer a later commentary (*midrash*) but the contemporary impression, the actual state of things. Of the laxity and insincerity into which the priestly service had by this time fallen a contemporary prophet, Malachi, as we have seen, bears indignant witness.[1] Of the scandal of

[1] See above, pp. 364–366.

mixed marriages which must needs be dealt with before he could find free inlet for his book of law, Ezra's own words give account. His well-nigh fanatical behavior on making the discovery, and his too rash and drastic measures to right the wrong, have already been considered.[1] Such frenzied conduct reveals not the prophetic largeness and liberalism but the puritan narrowness, intent on strict obedience to priestly and Levitical tradition; it awakens to a degree that race pride and exclusiveness which to the prophets seemed a danger to be watched and guarded.[2] One does not feel drawn to such a character; there is lack of sympathy and tolerance; it is the character of the puritan zealot. We ought not to dismiss it, however, without a glance at the other side. His autobiographic record reveals it as it were between the lines. It is with an outburst of tender piety, in his gratitude for the King's gracious decree (vii, 11–26), that the autobiography opens: "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of our fathers, who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem; and hath extended lovingkindness unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes" (vii, 27, 28). It is with a noble courage and faith that with his treasure-bearing company he sets out unarmed and unprotected for Jerusalem; "for," he says, "I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, 'The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good'" (viii, 22). It is a sincere self-identification with his people that prompts the notable prayer of contrite confession when he has been shocked by the corrupt state of things (ix, 5–15). If a man like this must be stern and exacting, it is not from hardness or blindness; it is because he is deeply sensible of the far-reaching issues at stake.

[1] See above, p. 380. [2] See above, p. 328.

The story of Ezra is not all told, not even its most important part is told, in the Book of Ezra. As has already been noted, he could not accomplish the errand that had brought him from Babylon until his publication of the Mosaic law could be made with approval and authority, — an opportunity for which he had to wait twelve years.[1] The sequel, supplying the intervening events, is told in a succeeding work, the Book of Nehemiah, which originally was doubtless a continuation of Ezra and the concluding section of the Chronicler's religious history. Of this Chronicle account, tracing the Temple service and ritual from earliest times, the reading of the Levitical law (Neh. viii, 1–12), followed by a week of festival (viii, 13–18), a day of fasting and confession (ix), and confirmed by a solemn covenant (x), would be the natural culmination. It marked the point where the civic and the religious administrations, united under one revered constitution, could work harmoniously together, each supplying what the other lacked. It is from the settled sense of this situation, long the established order of things, that the Chronicler compiles his epitome a century and a half later, when Judaism has matured the promise of its birthday.[2]

Nehemiah: Book of the Patriotic Administrator

The Book of Nehemiah is more than a mere factual and annalistic continuation of Chronicles. It acquires a unique literary interest from the generous amount of autobiographical material that it incorporates. All the intimate experiences and events in which he was the protagonist — the royal authority brought from Susa where he was cupbearer to the Persian king, the speedy rebuilding of the walls, the wise handling of craft without and graft within the city, the suppression of Sabbath abuse and trade, the flaming wrath against alien marriages in priestly circles — are told in artless, modest, yet self-respecting style in Nehemiah's own words. There is nothing else like it in

An Engaging Autobiography

[1] See above, p. 380.

[2] Cf. above, pp. 381–383.

the Old Testament; Ezra's personal notes (Ez. vii, 27–ix, 15), which come nearest, being rather of the mission than of the man. The way in which the Chronicler in places has overlaid the account with his own matter sometimes confuses the sequence of events; but one quite ignores this on entering into the limpid charm of Nehemiah's self-revealing *journal intime*. If for no other reason, the comprehensive Chronicle history as a cultus product may be accounted well worth while for allowing two of the most patriotic and self-effacing men in all the Hebrew annals, Ezra and Nehemiah, thus to speak out for themselves what is in their heart. It makes the real inwardness of the noblest Judaism no more remote but near and intimate, as clerical and academic annals cannot do.

NOTE. Nehemiah's autobiographical notes, as indicated by the first person, extend from i, 1, to vii, 5, at which point a genealogy intervenes which is virtually a repetition of Ezra ii; and the first person is not resumed until chapter xiii, where on his second visit to Jerusalem (cf. xiii, 6) he vindicates the law. The passage viii, 9–12, ought to be added to the account of Nehemiah, though not in his words. It is remarkable that, though their respective services to their country's welfare were coöperative and complementary, there is nothing to indicate that Ezra and Nehemiah were personally acquainted with each other.

III. REACTIONS AND ALLEVIATIONS

These clerical and academic annals, as represented in the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, show us that by the time the Chronicler wrote, in the third century B.C., the night of legalism, with its chill austerities, its restrictive atmosphere, had indeed settled down over the tractable mind of Judaism. The Temple system held the undisputed monopoly of public allegiance and sentiment. This régime, though not genial, was of course not all bad; and at any rate it made the Mosaic religion a thing stanchly articulate and distinctive. Like later Puritan eras of which we have

knowledge, it fostered sturdy and strenuous character. Still, it was a night, a kind of pause and suspense while the soul of prophecy slumbered.[1] What we have to note here, however, is that it was not without its kindly stars, by which men of more outreaching spirit could steer their way; and not without its songs in the night, or in other words its literary utterances of more tolerant and liberal tenor. To some consideration of these we now gladly turn; it opens to a freer atmosphere.

Forewarned but not Forearmed

If the nation had lapsed into a too bigoted attitude, it was not for lack of wise warning. As long ago as the time of the Second Isaiah, who exhorted Israel at large to "gather out the stones" (Isa. lxii, 10), to "take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people" (lvii, 14), their untoward tendencies were laid bare lest these work to the ruin of their prophetic mission in the world. If they allowed their spirit of clannishness, race pride, self-righteousness, and exclusiveness to get the upper hand, how could they, from a people despised and forsaken, become a people sought out and honored and loved? In his idea they were to be not only righteous and conscientious but so gracious and tolerant that their life and law should be an attraction to the nations that needed salvation.[2] It is plain to be felt that by the time we are now considering the nation had receded far from this prophetic ideal. They had given their untoward tendencies the rein. And it is not hard to trace how this came about. Not ignoring the first impulse of the returned exiles, the refusal in building the Temple to fraternize with the people of the land (Ezra iv, 1–5), one has but to recall how Ezra's notions of ritual purity and blue blood precipitated the matter of dissolving the alien marriages, and Nehemiah's further pressure with the consequent Samaritan schism and rivalry,[3] until Jewish race pride

[1] Cf. above, pp. 352 ff. [2] See above, pp. 328 and 334.
[3] See above, p. 386.

and orthodoxy and exclusiveness became a fierce religious tenet. For this not the Pentateuchal law was responsible but the narrow and unsympathetic application of it, — an application far from ready to carry it onward to its supreme end in love. Moses' resolution of it in love to God (Deut. vi, 4, 5) easily became the hearty "Hear, O Israel"; but the culminating commandment of love to neighbor (Lev. xix, 18) remained incidental, not forearmed against that narrowing discrimination which, until Jesus came to enlarge its scope, would shut its neighbor circle up to the Jewish race.[1] Hence the nation's spiritual self-limitation, and its consequent aloneness in the fellowship of nations.

I

Veiled Signs of Reaction and Protest. It must not be supposed that the drastic measures instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah would leave the public sentiment in stable and tranquil equilibrium. The people rejoiced indeed in the completed Mosaic law as a whole; it was their welcomed Palladium of conduct; but in some places it hurt. That wholesale putting away of foreign wives especially, invading thus the sacred relations of the family, was really, as we see from Malachi, the heroic remedy for a prior worse evil, namely, the putting away of native wives.[2] As a safeguard of racial and religious integrity it had its justification; but it was a deadly blow to that primal institution of conjugal mating which is the wellspring of neighbor love.[3] So the divorce itself, whatever its need and motive, awakened the healthy instinct of the subsiding prophecy to urge the care of the spirit of fidelity within; and we hear Malachi saying, "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah the God of Israel, and him

[1] Cf. above, p. 402. [2] See above, p. 365. [3] Cf. Note, p. 402.

that covereth his garment with violence, saith Jehovah of hosts; therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (Mal. ii, 15, 16). This, though practically contemporary, was probably written before Ezra's remedial code was enforced; but the chance of treachery and hardness of heart remained, and by many would be deeply felt. To the sensitive and reflective mind it would be like an uncharted rock in the spiritual voyage of human nature, against which the best that is in man was in danger of collision and wreck.

It is to that inner boding, rising from a depth beneath race pride or religious rigor, that our thoughts now turn. It could not help existing; and in the literature of this Puritan era there were not lacking signs of reaction and protest, though in the prevailing state of sentiment these must be veiled. Two products of this feeling come up for consideration, both in cleverly chosen literary type: an idyl and an allegory.

Ruth: Idyl of an Old-Time Domestic Fealty

"Daintiest of love idyls," is Goethe's descriptive phrase for the Book of Ruth, — a phrase to whose aptness every appreciative reader will set his seal. There is no occasion here to remark upon its meaning; the frank reading of it, as one would read a story of to-day, is its all-sufficing exposition. It fits without trimming into every age, and here perhaps we might leave it. It is worth while, however, to note how graciously, yet how reactively, it fits into its own.

It may be asked what warrant there is for putting the Book of Ruth among the works of this late Puritan era rather than where our English Bible puts it, between Judges and Samuel. The answer takes us first to its place in the Hebrew canon. The fact that it is in the third division, the so-called Writings, — being one of the five Megilloth,[1] or little classics, — is a silent indication both of its lateness

[1] For the Five Megilloth, see below, pp. 482–510.

and of its popularity. Of course this does not necessarily mean that it is an invented story; it may well have come down through the traditions of the Davidic line; its chief point, in fact, depends on its claim as actual history. But we have further to note, with charmed realization of its skill, that the history, if such, was rescued from oblivion and told just when it would do the most good. Going back to the rude old times "when the judges judged" (Ruth i, 1), times of which otherwise we learn little that is pleasant and peaceful, it shows by a concrete case that there might be ideal relations of love and fidelity in families of mixed origin; that ancient marriage customs were tolerant of foreign women; that even from the Moabite people, with whom Moses forbade and Nehemiah destroyed fellowship (Deut. xxiii, 3–6; Neh. xiii, 1–3, 23–25), came one of the sweetest and noblest of conjugal unions; and finally, that King David, the idealized hero of Judah, the man after God's own heart, was the great-grandson of a Moabitess. There is a deal of adroit suggestion in the innocent genealogy appended to the story of Ruth (Ruth iv, 18–22). It does not spare even the race-proud stock of Judah itself; yet it holds no overt reproach or offense. The Book of Ruth simply embodies the reaction that lies implicit in the normal domestic relation, with love the arbiter, against the strained conditions that must have embittered much of the later Jewish society.

Jonah: Allegory of Good Will and Cross-Purpose

From the idyl, so aptly timed and devised, we pass to the allegory, if such it may be called, the Book of Jonah, a work of more rugged and massive conception, equally fitted to age and public, but veiled in story and symbol. By reason of its bizarre imagery and its anomalous situations this book has not received its due from modern readers. "This is the tragedy of the Book of Jonah," someone has remarked, "that a book which is made the means of one of the most sublime

revelations of truth in the Old Testament should be known to most only for its connection with a whale."[1] While, however, the whale incident cannot be ignored (it furnishes in fact an important key), our concern is rather with the book's place in Hebrew thinking and its consequent contribution to the growing fund of Biblical literature.

Extrinsic Traits of the Book

Though numbered with the works of the Twelve Prophets, this Book of Jonah, unlike them, was not written by the person whose name it bears but about him; not in the intense vein of prophetic warning or rhapsody but in the inviting vein of narrative; and not strictly prophecy at all but what one may call criticism of prophecy. How it came to be ranked and valued as a prophetic utterance is explainable perhaps by its connection with a historic prophet. There was a prophet Jonah the son of Amittai, who in the days of Jeroboam the Second foretold the restoration of the ancient borders of Israel, to the relief of the Northern Kingdom from a threatened failure (2 Kings xiv, 25–27). The name, however, seems to be all that associates that prophet with this Book of Jonah. His time was about that of Amos; that perhaps was why the book is placed, with only the undated Obadiah chapter between, just after Amos in the canon; but the sentiment and situation recognized therein is much later. By all inner indications the Book of Jonah was composed in the midst of the Puritan era and when the spirit of prophecy had so subsided that it was rather a reminiscence than a present influence.

The author's use of the early prophet's name suggests the type of literature to which the book belongs, a type coming into favor in this Puritan era, namely, what was called *midrash*, or edifying enlargement and comment.[2] As the growing custom was, the author has chosen to take a name from the nation's historic traditions and weave a lesson round it.

[1] Quoted in G. A. Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," Vol. II, p. 492.

[2] See above, p. 407, footnote.

NOTE. If the Book of Jonah is meant to reflect actual conditions, the author's choice of prophet and historic background for his *midrash* is not without profound significance. Going back to the time when the historic Jonah of Gath-hepher had by his word averted a threatened calamity and under Jeroboam II witnessed the northern kingdom's greatest reach of external dominion (2 Kings xiv, 25–27), he strikes thus into the era when Amos and Hosea labored in judgment and love with Israel (see above, pp. 148–159), and makes coincident with this Jonah's call to proclaim judgment and mercy to the great world outside of Israel. It is the first revelation of Jehovah's gracious purpose to humanity at large, and it begins with the mightiest and wickedest city of all (cf. Jonah i, 2). The sequel, as the author portrays it, discloses both the world's readiness and prophecy's unreadiness to grasp the great occasion. The author means thus to show, perhaps, that from the beginning this unreadiness on the part of prophecy has been inveterate (cf. Isa. l, 2; lxiii, 5), quite in contrast to the culmination of Jehovah's design as shown in the Second Isaiah (cf. Isa. xlv, 22–24; xlix, 6).

By a rather loose term I have called his book an allegory, but it is more like a parable. The only thing suggesting allegory in our more restricted modern sense is the name Jonah son of Amittai, whose meaning, "Dove son of Truth," if meant to figure in the story, would only designate what in the gracious purpose of Jehovah the prophet ought to have been but failed to be. Such a use of the name, indeed, would not be meaningless — a little subtler, however, and more of the character of a literary conceit, than we are wont to ascribe to Bible writers.

A Nation's Plight Mirrored in a Prophet's

We are familiar with Hamlet's description of the purpose of the drama, "to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show . . . the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."[1] This allegory of Jonah has, it would seem, a similar purpose; it is at any rate an impressive mirror of the "age and body" of its time. It is minded to give the "form and pressure" in a picture of divine mercy encountering human frowardness; and this it does by a story that in the recalcitrant

[1] Hamlet, Act III, sc. ii.

mood of an old-time prophet portrays a static and stagnant Judaism mindless of its true mission in the world. This, I think, is the book's veiled sign of reaction and protest. It does not denounce; it is content to let portrayal speak for itself. There is in it a rub of satire, not without touches of caustic humor; but underneath it all, to my mind, is the burden of a tender heart made heavy over the cold intolerance and exclusiveness into which so much of the post-prophetic Judaism has congealed. A far cry this from the ideal of the Servant of Jehovah, or the impulse that brought the exiles home from Babylon.

We leave it to the reader to linger on the details of the story. The personal traits and moods of the prophet — his reluctance to obey his call, his fear lest God should be kind and thus spoil his threat of doom, his childish anger when his fear is justified — explain themselves and do not need our elucidation. The impressive background on which the story moves — as it were a world full of divine good will and human responsiveness waiting only prophetic coöperation — reveals on the part of the writer a spiritual breadth and liberalism beyond that of any other Old Testament writer. To find its parallel we must review the whole prophetic movement. And this is what I think the writer has done. That his purview is much greater than one individual's experience, or even one generation's, is brought to light by the leading figure that has caused so much question, the metaphor of the great fish, which, as I have intimated, is, rightly interpreted as such, in reality the key to the writer's range and scope. Considered as a literal account, as a thing that actually happened, it verges on the absurd, not to say the unthinkable; the writer himself, bold as he is, would pause at that. Considered as a symbolic experience of a prophet who in broad consciousness is identified with the destiny of a whole nation, the figure is already prophetic property, used by Jeremiah and doubtless in this writer's

mind. When the exiles were first deported to Babylon, Jeremiah thus portrayed the event: "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, . . . he hath, like a monster, swallowed me up, he hath filled his maw with my delicacies" (Jer. li, 34). Ten verses later he added: "And I will execute judgment upon Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up" (li, 44). Here, as we see, the writer, whose whole story is a *midrash*, has his underlying imagery made to his hand, furnished by prophecy as the name was furnished by history. Let us see what comes of it, as estimated on this plane.

The Fish and the Psalm of Thanksgiving

It is worth while here to take a moment's retrospective glance at the large prophetic field and ideal that doubtless engaged the author's thought. As we have seen, the whole majestic movement of Hebrew prophecy, with its presaged avails for Israel and the world, centered round an ordeal of captivity, exile, and eventual release.[1] The vision of the two Isaiahs covers the whole inner movement;[2] Jeremiah predicts a new starting point of history from its crowning event (Jer. xxiii, 7, 8). The experience was meant for Israel's correction and redemption (cf. Jer. xlvi, 28; Isa. xl, 1; xliii, 1); meant still more for his appointed mission as servant and witness of Jehovah (cf. Isa. xli, 15, 16; xliii, 10, 12). And so its outcome, as contemplated from a later time by a just insight, was not bane at all but blessing. Is it any wonder that when our author tried to portray this engulfing exile experience in the terms of Jeremiah's figure the literal situation overflowed the image's congruity, — that his imagination pictured the prophet as not only surviving for three days and three nights inside a sea monster but as composedly raising a psalm of thanksgiving for the deliverance thus wrought? Imagery had disappeared in reality, corresponding as it did

[1] Cf. above, pp. 135–143. [2] Cf. above, pp. 168, 302–304.

to a great literal fact of Israel's inner history. So read, its absurdity falls away. A New Testament writer, reading it as a sign for the generation of Jesus' time, connects it with the mystic idea of death and resurrection (Matt. xii, 40).

The Grace, the Gourd, and the Self-Willed Grudge

How did the prophet behave subsequently, or (if we have rightly shifted from figurative to literal) how did the nation, chosen, privileged, and commissioned, respond to its prophetic duty? The rest of the book, carrying the allegory onward to the impressive situation wherein the spiritual "form and pressure" of the author's time is mirrored, is the answer. It resolves into a well-wrought scene of contrast, — the universal loving-kindness of God for His creation on the one hand, like a gracious radiance over all humanity, and on the other the childish vexation of a prophet clinging to unrepentant consistency and nursing a self-willed grudge against mercy. The metaphor of the gourd, with its ephemeral connotations, serves to accentuate the essential smallness into which the prophetic motive has fallen. This shown, with the prophet still unreconciled to the tender inconsistency of divine grace, the story abruptly ends, leaving the angry prophet still sitting, morose and unsheltered, outside the city, waiting for a doom that does not fall. As we sense the power of this simple situation, with the compassion of Jehovah offsetting it, we feel that the Book of Jonah, for all its mildness of method, is more than a reaction, — it is in effect a tremendous indictment, pulsing with divine judgment. And that the indictment, made when it was, was all too just, we have the dominant race pride and intolerance and exclusiveness of the later Judaism to betoken.

We have spoken of the reactions and veiled protests that this Puritan régime engendered. There were alleviations too. Let us, without closely specifying, make brief note of their existence and influence.

II

While the Big Book is Growing. It will doubtless have been observed that the books of Ruth and Jonah, which we have associated with certain reactive tendencies during the Puritan régime, purport to have drawn their themes from the history subsequent to Moses, — Ruth from its primitive social conditions, Jonah from its inchoate prophetic activities; in both cases deducing a more lenient and liberal idea of divine and human nature than the current sentiment of the writers' time afforded. This fact, as far as it goes, is not without significance. It seems to imply that prevailing spiritual conditions are too narrow. Ezra's Pentateuch — with a priesthood administering its Levitical ordinances, with busy scribes and rabbis "setting a hedge about the law"[1] — was not, could not be, the sole Book of Life. It was, indeed, the foundation stone of a magnificent literary edifice, the first division of what was to become a full and rich and varied library, but there was yet much to be built thereon. And the materials for this addition, under the care of these same scribes and men of letters, were all the while undergoing the sifting, selection, and editorship which would fit them for a place in the finished structure.[2] So, during all this period which we have roughly bounded by the compilation of Chronicles, the "big book" — the Hebrew canon — was in silent process of growth. The second division, a kind of complement to the Law, came to be known, apparently about 300 B.C., as The Prophets, the largest division of the canon, containing, along with the prophets proper, also the history which elicited their warnings and counsels.

In this chapter of our study we have spoken of the Puritan Era, as if it were a time that came and went; and we have traced its beginnings in literature and inducing national experience. But it was not so truly a period as a

[1] Cf. above, p. 384.

[2] See above, pp. 375, 376.

spiritual attitude, a state of mind determined mainly by the dominance of the Levitical element of the Law, whose operation, while regulative, was rigid and exacting. This element had, however, a rival prior in influence, namely, the Deuteronomic, which with greater or less dissemination had been influential since the time of Josiah; and through this, the prophetic farewell of Moses, the distinctively personal force of the law became as it were a household companion, honored and revered. Of the succeeding history, as this was reduced to permanent form, the Deuteronomic spirit was a potent factor, — its style and molding being quite perceptible in much of it. Ezra's incorporation of Deuteronomy with the completed Pentateuch gave increase to an influence already powerful, an influence which the Levitical code could share with but not impair.

History Charged with Prophecy

"Never has any people," says Professor S. H. Butcher, "been so conscious of its own spiritual calling as the Jews; none has had so profound an intuition of the future. They pondered their long preparation and equipment for their office, its unique design, their repeated lapses, their baffled hopes, the promises postponed."[1] These words are a scholar's tribute to a history charged with prophecy. We have noted how the body of historical books from Joshua to Second Kings came to be recognized as "Earlier Prophets"; it was a just designation.[2] And when the "Later Prophets," from Isaiah to Malachi, were coördinated with these in one collection, the meaning of Israel's mission in the world and in the ages received its succinct expression, sharing thereby with the Puritan Era's contribution of Mosaic law.

[1] "Harvard Lectures on Greek Subjects," p. 31.

[2] See above, pp. 376, 377.

CHAPTER VIII

TREASURY OF THE CHOICE HEBREW CLASSICS

[Independent of eras and epochs]

SUCH is the designation that may fitly be given to the third and closing division of the Hebrew Scripture canon,[1] on which, having hitherto been occupied mainly with the field and purpose of the other two, we are now ready in turn to enter. The Hebrew name of this division, *K'thubhim*, "writings," has for equivalent the Greek *graphai*, translated "scriptures" (cf. Matt. xxvi, 54), and used in the New Testament to denote the Old Testament as a whole.[2] Here, however, the word is of more restricted application. One might by a modern term translate it "literary works," such being the implied distinction of this section as compared with the others. It is in effect the consciously literary portion of the Hebrew Bible, comprising the choice works in which, as the Jewish men of letters understood it, the literary feeling and standard, as compared with the legal and the prophetic, came to dominance.

The Implied New Criterion

A classic is a work that has stood the test of time, surviving the shifts and waves of immediate juncture or opinion. It takes account of these, arises intimately from them as does all vital literature, and has its fitted effect upon them, but it is based on something deeper and more permanent, something that without seeming to do so gives more to history than it derives therefrom.

Relation to Time and Change

[1] For the contents of these three divisions see note on "The Original Order of the Old Testament Canon," p. 19, above.

[2] It is worthy of note that the title given to the whole Old Testament in the new Jewish version (1917) is "The Holy Scriptures."

Hence the quality intimated above. These classical works are for the most part independent of eras and epochs; the timeless and universal claims of human nature alone can account for them. They represent in a true sense the impact of the Hebrew mind on the abiding issues of mankind.

I. Traits of the Collection as a Whole

The fact that in making up the body of sacred text the Jewish scribes and rabbis set first and greatest store by the Law (the Pentateuch) and secondarily by the Prophets (prophets proper with their setting of history[1]), thus subserving the practical uses of Temple and synagogue, need not be taken as an implication that they deemed this third division a mere repository of left-overs and miscellanies. The high character of its contents negatives this idea. A collection whose distinguishing works are Psalms, Proverbs, and Job would hardly be held in ignoble estimation in the varied values of Biblical thought. The scale of estimate is likelier, indeed, to have inclined the other way. For those who loved letters for their own sake the transition to this division must have been like escape into a freer air; for these were the books which, instead of being read *to* the people by official requirement, could be read according to taste and convenience *by* them. It was the division suited to the matured culture of a reading people.

Bear in mind what has just been said about the relation of these classical works to time and change. We are speaking now not of a progressive growth but of an eventual collection. As a collection it ranges over all the history of Israel from the awaking of the literary sense onward, — a history in which several lines of education in the school of Jehovah were parallel and blended. In the final make-up of the canon these were discriminated and classified. So,

[1] Cf. above, pp. 376, 377.

describing roughly the avails of this third deposit as compared with the other two, we may say that as they drew from a history charged with law and with prophecy this in turn draws from the same history charged with literature.

Let us consider some salient qualities of this collection as a whole.

The Human Genius and Initiative

The most differentiating, perhaps, is traceable in its attitude toward the sacred truths of life. This is apparent not in assertion but in the unspoken assumption and atmosphere of the whole work. It is the simple conviction of the writer that his thought or vision is his own, and his faith that it is as true as if it were an attested revelation from heaven. This feeling is no novelty; it lies at the roots of the human creative genius. A consciousness often noted in the swing and fervor of poetic imagination or inventive thought, it is the intrepid uprise of human intuition to meet and strike hands with some phase of the absolute truth or beauty. Its presence here is noteworthy on account of the prevailing idea of divine revelation which obtained in a nation so sincerely the ward and learners of Jehovah.

What I mean may be understood from the current formulas of law and prophecy as compared with the absence of such things in our literary section. The constant attesting word of the Mosaic law, approved by miraculous events, was, "And Jehovah spoke unto Moses"; and its precepts were implicitly accepted on that score. Similarly, the prophets' stated authorization was, "Thus saith Jehovah"; and their word was heeded without question of its source. It was as if the whole nation were consciously dependent on the revealed word of God, which avowed itself infinitely beyond man's (cf. Isa. lv, 8–11). Yet alongside of this we may put the noteworthy fact that no such assertion or assumption is made in the books we are considering. Their typical didactic formula, rather, is, "Incline thine ear, and hear the words

of the wise" (cf. Prov. xxii, 17). All that is presupposed is the spontaneous uprise and free play of human aspiration and intellect (cf. what is said of Our Lady Wisdom, Prov. viii, 22–31) working out its own salvation as in the sight of Jehovah. In this the nation's highest literary genius is engaged. A distinctively human movement this, yet accepted in the sacred canon as an integral strand in the web of the Word of God, and, indeed, on the same plane of revelatory value. Even its obscurest writer, using a word peculiar to the divine claim, dares to say, *n'um haggeber*, "oracle of the strong man" (Prov. xxx, 1), while its greatest is bold to report undying utterances of God out of the whirlwind of nature (Job xxxviii–xli).

NOTE. This sense of the intimacy of human genius with the answering collaboration of the divine, as referred to above, is poetically described by Browning in the words of Abt Vogler, as the latter tries to account for the transcendent worth and beauty of his musical improvisation:

". . . for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky."

This merely puts in intenser form the felt coöperation, in the productions of the purest minds, of divine and human.

The Sphere of Personal Values

Another thing to be noted of this section of Scripture is that it is concerned more directly than are the others with the passions and activities and duties — in a word, with the character — of the individual man. The Law deals with the affairs of church and state as a whole and with men's duties in prescribed relation thereto. Prophecy is concerned with Israel's foreign relations and with the nation's moral integrity in view of its destiny of exile and opportunity. All this has its bearing on the individual, for a nation's obligations are only those of the individual writ large; but its edicts and warnings are addressed for the most part to the people in the mass, and do not go

far to enter their homes and fields and business. It has been noted, as a kind of exception, that Ezekiel, among his neighbor exiles by the Chebar, brings the sense of sin and justice home to the individual person (Ezek. xviii; xxxiii, 12–20),[1] but this is not like putting oneself by the side of the common man and speaking to his heart. The Law and the Prophets have their proper spheres of counsel and warning in attending to the domestic and foreign relations of the people as a communal unit. It is in this third section that the individual, from the awaking of the literary sense onward, comes to his own. That is one reason why the section is so independent of eras and epochs. In the eternal demands of human welfare and righteousness these do not count. Its works deal in various ways with personal character and conduct; we see the individual man in worship, in meditation, in counsel and controversy, at work, at intercourse and business, at contrite confession of needs and sins. The whole gamut of personal life, so far as relates to morals and wise conduct, is traversed. All this works together to give this collection of classic "writings" a central and supreme place in the heart of the Bible.

Outcome in Literary Mind and Art

The literary sense governing the works of the collection naturally gave rise to special elaboration and artistry after the Hebrew manner, instances of which will be noted in their place. One gets from each of them a sense of uniqueness. They are not like the literary works of other nations. Distinctions of lyric, epic, drama are absent or only inchoate. And yet many of them, in their way, have achieved unique distinction as masterpieces, specimens, so to speak, of what Hebrew writers can do. It is as if each of the native types of literary form,[2] developed through years and ages from the primitive spoken to the matured written organism and style,[3] were represented, as if for the world to judge, by its finest and best product.

[1] Cf. above, p. 267.

[2] See "The Native Mold of Literary Form," pp. 64–72, above.

[3] See above, pp. 13–16.

The fact is to be noted that this final division of the Hebrew canon was being made up just as the Hebrew type of literature was coming out of its age-long seclusion into the notice of the larger world, a candidate, so to speak, for recognition and power among the cultural forces of mankind. As such it need not apologize for existence or compromise with other literatures for relative merit; it could trust its own intrinsic vitality. But neither, on the other hand, need it put its most provincial wares forward. This newest division, accordingly, may be regarded as a kind of culmination wherein are displayed the supreme achievements of the Hebrew religion and thought detached in a degree from the chosen people's narrow history and brought nearer to the common frontier where the mind of other nations can fraternize with it.

It is also worthy of note that while the make-up of this third division was still a matter fluid and undetermined, the earliest version of the Old Testament Scriptures (the Septuagint, 264 B.C. onward) was also being made, thus giving the Hebrew thought currency in the most highly developed language and by the side of the most cultivated literature of the world. In this fusing of languages the latest section of the canon, as a representative literary influence, would bear no unimportant part. An indication of this, I think, is afforded by the changes of distribution and arrangement which the collection underwent as soon as it was done into Greek, apparently to make the literary tissue more homogeneous. Job was put before Psalms; Ruth was transferred to its more proper place by the side of Judges; Lamentations was placed after Jeremiah; Esther after Nehemiah; Daniel was adjudged worthy of a place among the greater prophets[1]; while the cultus books, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, which had occupied a place at the end as a supplement,[2] were transferred to their proper places after

[1] Cf. above, p. 281.

[2] Cf. above, p. 405.

2 Kings. Thus this third division ceased to function as a coördinate element of the canon, and its treasury of the choice classics — the so-called poetical books — occupies, in our modern Bible, a place in the center of the Old Testament, with the body of great prophecy succeeding. Such arrangement improves the order in which, for modern uses, the Bible may be read.

As we are studying the Old Testament literature for the most part in the order dictated by history, we will continue to follow the history of arrangement also, taking up the books of this division in the order determined by the Jewish scribes. Some of the books have already been partly or sufficiently discussed; what remains to be said about them will come up in its due order.

II. The Three Great Classics

In the case of these three books, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, though so weighty, there is not the same reason for detailed description and analysis that there was in the case of the great prophets. Their independence of historic eras and epochs makes such treatment unnecessary; their subject matter in part forbids it. It will be more advisable rather to inquire after the literary form and workmanship, with its bearing on the idea, and after the leading idea itself.

I

The Five Books of Psalms. Cited by our Lord as if representing a specific type of scripture literature (Luke xxiv, 44), the Psalms merit their rank at the head of this division as a treasury of the choice lyric poetry of Israel, a deposit of the verse that all through the history from the awaking of the literary sense onward was most potent to find and form the inner mind of the Israelitish people. Thus they embody what is most genuine and hearty in

the soul of man, what wells up from his deepest nature in the unforced yet finely ordered language of prayer and praise and song. The name given the book by the scribes at its completion was *sepher t'hillim*, "Book of Praises," as designating the ruling sentiment especially of the later collections, referring thus to their use in public or private worship. Other names occur for individual psalms, such as "a song," "a prayer," "an instruction" (*maschil*). The Greek name, given to the individual poem when the book had become a part of the Septuagint version, was *psalmos*, a translation of the Hebrew specific term *mizmor*, meaning "a song set to stringed instruments," or as we should say, with orchestra accompaniment, — an obvious reference to the use made of these poems in the late organized Temple service.

The Lyrical Genius and Stimulus

These final names for the Psalms, as single poems and as a compiled book, are an undesigned designation of the Hebrew native aptitude. As already in part intimated,[1] this was not for war or government or scholarship or art — what might be called the aristocratic endowments. The one art in which they excelled sprang from and in turn laid hold on the mind of the common people. It was the art of sacred lyric poetry, which when it became steady and self-conscious took the names by which we know it, — for the instrumental specification of *mizmor* is exactly paralleled by lyric (*lurikos*), "for the lyre"; and "praises," being the uprise of the heart to God, are the most buoyant and heartfelt subject matter for such expression. In a word, the Psalms embody the thoughts and feelings that the nation through all its history could sing; that is, put into the most spontaneous form of expression. How truly these lyrics give voice to the deep music of human nature is evident in the fact that the Book of Psalms has become, by translation or virtual paraphrase, the hymn book of a whole world. To say that these lyrics

[1] See above, pp. 36–38.

are the Hebrew *religious* poetry — as if they must needs be separated from poems of other sentiment,

> And lovers' songs be turned to holy psalms, —

is in fact no differentiation except in modern estimate. Secular and religious were not dissociated in ancient thought or emotion; all was religious among people who lived in the conscious presence of a personal and accessible God.

As to the occasion of these lyrical uprises, Professor Palgrave's definition of the lyric may perhaps furnish a fit suggestion. "Lyrical," he says,[1] "has been here held essentially to imply that each Poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation." In the case of our Psalms it is as if the occasion of the lyric mood were determined by a kingly mind and sung into a people's heart. These single incitements, among the Hebrews, were such as may be predicated of a people to whom their divinely guided history was a very vital thing[2]; they were like a translation or rather transmutation of their history, with its dimly sensed destiny, into personal experience and devotion, — yet not so that specific events or situations are easily traceable but rather their fragrance and power. Thus it was that the chosen people's faith was found and formed through the molding power of lyric poetry.

NOTE. As the lyric influence of song has accompanied the whole Hebrew history, it has come several times to consideration in the foregoing pages, both in general terms and as connected with the composition and collection of Psalms. See "The Song," pp. 66, 67, under "The Native Mold of Literary Form." See also "David's Part in the Literary Awakening," pp. 81–83; "Of the Davidic Influence," pp. 89–92, for the general beginnings of Psalm composition; and "The Collecting of Psalms" (by Hezekiah), pp. 197–201, for the conjectured further stage of the Psalm movement. This brings us to the matured phase, which is the subject now before us.

[1] In the preface to his "Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics."

[2] See above, pp. 37, 38.

As regards the authorship of the Psalms, the fact that the titles prefixed to two thirds of them are evidently later additions and so not implicitly to be trusted has given rise to a veritable riot of conjecture on the part of modern critics, who, recognizing merely scribal rather than original authority, perhaps felt freer to doubt and discard,[1] — a feeling which may be humored all the way from misgiving to stark denial. At any rate, these titles, which were once deemed as truly inspired as the rest, have very likely been suffered to pass under undue depreciation. We may accept them for what they are obviously worth. They have the distinction of being the earliest examples of Biblical editorship and estimate; they are judgments passed by scribes whose minds were steeped in the literary values of their race and history. As such they belong to the avails of the Jewish mind and culture.

The Source in a Personality

NOTE. Of the Psalm authorship imputed by the titles we may quote the account given by J. W. Thirtle, in "The Titles of the Psalms," p.3:

> Speaking of the titles as a whole, it is well . . . to notice that just one hundred of the psalms are in such a manner referred to their reputed authors — one (90) is ascribed to Moses, seventy-three to David, two (72, 127) to Solomon, twelve to Asaph, eleven to the sons of Korah, and one (89) to Ethan the Ezrahite. From this it appears that David is *the* psalmist — no other writer can overshadow his fame; and it is easy to understand how it has come about for the entire collection to pass by his name.

Quite independently of the titles, however, one gets from an unbiased conversance with the Psalms the feeling that their organic sentiment is not scattered and miscellaneous but individualized and specific, — in other words, that it derives ultimately from an author who has impressed the stamp of undying personality upon his words and, as these are winged with song, upon his people. As to whose this

[1] A little like Adam Bede, maybe, who when of a Sunday morning he read his Bible, generally in implicit faith, "enjoyed the freedom of occasionally differing from an Apocryphal writer."

personality is there can be but one answer. Of all the personalities of Old Testament history — one need not except Jacob or Moses or Samuel — David's is incomparably the best known, the most loved, the most bracing, the most prophetic. This comes largely from his life, which in First and Second Samuel is more fully told than that of any other old-time personage, and which, in spite of grievous and sincerely repented faults, was a sweet and refining influence on all classes. Mostly, however, it comes from the way in which he coined his inner life — the life of a king who remembered his shepherd days and who could be humble and contrite — into the lyric language of the heart. It matters little whether we have his exact words or not, whether we can certainly trace individual poems to him or not. The ruling spirit of the Psalms is Davidic. Psalms written by others, or at a later day, do not lose the vital stamp of his personal fervor and faith. The vigor of trust, the purity of resolve, the deep sense and confession of sin, the sensitiveness to the wickedness and treachery of ungodly men, are spiritual qualities wrought out in the personal devotion and experience of King David, the king whose memory was cherished as "the man after God's own heart" (cf. 1 Sam. xiii, 14; Acts xiii, 22), the type of true kingliness.

NOTE. How truly the utterances of the Psalms were referred by the compilers to David's personality is seen in the titles in which specific events of his life are mentioned as the occasion, most of which events are taken from his life as a man — and, indeed, as an outlaw — among men. The list of these is given in the note, pp. 90, 91, above. Of course it is to be noted that these are only fourteen out of the seventy-three Psalms ascribed to David, the rest being supposedly the work of the royal poet.

David's personal attitude toward his subjects and toward his kingly duty is significantly indicated in "the last words of David," 2 Sam. xxiii, 1–7. The passage embodies much

of the sentiment that one finds throughout the Davidic Psalms; the main simile is of special fitness and beauty.

The saying[1] of David the son of Jesse,
And the saying[1] of the man raised on high,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet singer of Israel:
The spirit of the Lord spoke by me,
And His word was upon my tongue.
The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spoke to me:
"Ruler over men shall be the righteous,
Even he that ruleth in the fear of God,
And as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds;
When through clear shining after rain,
The tender grass springeth out of the earth."
For is not my house established with God?
For an everlasting covenant He hath made with me,
Ordered in all things, and sure;
For all my salvation, and all my desire,
Will He not make it to grow?
But the ungodly, they are as thorns thrust away, all of them,
For they cannot be taken with the hand;
But the man that toucheth them
Must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear;
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.

These words may or may not have been actually written by David, but one cannot, on cold critical grounds, deny the truth of the picture they give of "the sweet singer of Israel" devoting his royal gift and art to promote the gentle growth of justice and well-being among the people of whom he is the anointed king. And the love and idealizing devotion of the people was the response.

The Book of Psalms as we have it is the result of several collections or compilations made at different times in the history of Israel, doubtless for liturgical uses in the service

[1] Lit. "oracle"; cf. above, p. 429. I use here the translation of "The Holy Scriptures," the recent Jewish version.

of the second Temple. These compilations eventually came to final and canonical form — conjecturally about the middle of the second century before Christ — in five books, making up as a whole the collection designated by the various names, *sepher t'hillim*, "Book of Praises," the Psalms (our Lord's term, Luke xx, 42; xxiv, 44; cf. Acts i, 20), or simply "David" (cf. Heb. iv, 7). The fact that the first Psalm is obviously a prologue to the whole collection, and the last a liturgical summary of its leading character as a book of praises, indicates that the completed book was regarded as of unitary trend and spirit. In fact, until recent revised versions were made English readers were not aware of its division into five books, this feature being retained only in the Hebrew; though the marks of cleavage are plain enough, once pointed out. It is useful to take note of this distribution, as it furnishes some key to the movement of the Davidic poetry during the five hundred years of its power in the Temple and the nation.

The Final Distribution

NOTE. In each of the five books the end limit is indicated by a doxology, the last doxology extending to the length of a whole psalm (cl). The following list gives the inclusion of the books, with the doxologies that mark the end of them.

Book I. Psalms i–xli

[Psalm i, Prologue to the whole Book of Psalms]

Doxology, Psa. xli, 13:

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
From everlasting and to everlasting.
Amen, and Amen.

Book II. Psalms xlii–lxxii

Doxology, Psa. lxxii, 18, 19:

Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel,
Who only doeth wondrous things:
And blessed be his glorious name for ever:
And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen, and Amen.

To this is added a subscript (vs. 20): "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

Book III. Psalms lxxiii–lxxxix

Doxology, Psa. lxxxix, 52:

Blessed be Jehovah for evermore.
Amen, and Amen.

Book IV. Psalms xc–cvi

Doxology, Psa. cvi, 48:

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
From everlasting even to everlasting.
And let all the people say, Amen.
Praise ye Jehovah.[1]

Book V. Psalms cvii–cl

Doxological Psalm for the five books, Psalm cl.

Praise ye Jehovah.[1]
Praise God in his sanctuary:
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him for his mighty acts:
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him with trumpet sound:
Praise him with psaltery and harp.
Praise him with timbrel and dance:
Praise him with stringed instruments and pipe.
Praise him with loud cymbals:
Praise him with high sounding cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah.
Praise ye Jehovah.[1]

As one looks more closely into the matter, however, it becomes evident that the scribes and clergy, in making up the five books, availed themselves of many earlier groups or collections, representing different waves of religious sentiment or different liturgical uses in the service of Temple and synagogue. It is impossible on the scale of our present

[1] Heb. *Hallelujah*, a formula of praise which, beginning at Psa. civ, 35, becomes a frequent and characteristic feature of the later Psalms.

study to trace these in detail[1] or to fit them conjecturally into the thought and religion of their various times. Nor, indeed, is there practical occasion. Worship, in its elements of prayer, confession, meditation, thanksgiving, and praise, is a thing timeless and universal. Besides, any new material brought from time to time into the Psalter would be subject, like the hymns in our modern hymn books, to such changes as would bring them up to the date and occasion of their use. This would tend to make the styles of different eras uniform and to change specific situations, historical or personal, to the fitting idiom of a worshiping community or congregation.[2]

NOTE. An interesting illustration of how a poem of quaint earlier style and particular situation may be changed to the sentiment of a general congregational hymn may be seen in the use made of Bunyan's verses on Valiant-for-Truth in the "Pilgrim's Progress" by "The English Hymnal" (1906). The original and the modernized are here shown side by side:

Who would True Valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come Wind, come Weather.
There 's no Discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avow'd intent
To be a Pilgrim.
Who so beset him round
With dismal Stories,
Do but themselves confound,
His Strength the more is;
No Lion can him fright,
He 'll with a Giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a Pilgrim.

He who would valiant be
'Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
Follow the Master.
There 's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.
Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound —
His strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
Though he with giants fight:
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim.

[1] For a general treatment of the Book of Psalms from this point of view, among others, see W. R. Smith, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," lecture vii.

[2] Cf. above, pp. 82, 91, 92.

Hobgoblin nor foul Fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall Life inherit.
Then Fancies fly away,
He 'll fear not what men say,
He 'll labor night and day
To be a Pilgrim.

Since, Lord, thou dost defend
Us with thy Spirit,
We know we at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
I 'll fear not what men say,
I 'll labor night and day
To be a pilgrim.

It may be that the work of adopting and adapting the lyric poems of Israel to needed public uses was as flexible as that.

The Davidic Keynote and Leading Idea

Five books of poetry, gathered out of the lyric deposits of five centuries, composed by many unknown writers and singing guilds, reflecting the fortunes of Israel from the first great king's reign to a period far beyond the reign of any Judean monarch, yet all identified with the name of David and set like a mighty chorus to "the musical instruments of David the man of God" (Neh. xii, 36, 45, 46), — what then was the unitary and cohesive sentiment underlying it all, or, to put it in musical terms, the keynote and leading idea justifying its relation to that revered personality? Can we hope to get at it in some luminous and comprehensive distinction? And if so, can we catch from time to time such echoes or undertones of it as will make us aware that the Davidic strain is clear and continuous?

I think we can. I think we can trace through the Psalms a deep undertone of harmony with the most far-reaching utterances of the prophets. They, as we have noted, centered the eventual leadership and blessedness of Israel in David (cf. Jer. xxx, 9; Ezek. xxxiv, 23, 24; xxxvii, 24, 25; Hos. iii, 5), and prophesied for him a perpetual kingdom (Jer. xxxiii, 17; Isa. lv, 3); he is the idealized founder of the Messianic line. Of this he himself was dimly aware, though little realizing what it meant; as one can read in 2 Sam. vii, where Jehovah gives his dynasty the promise of

perpetuity and unique greatness. He took this promise royally to heart, and from that time sought in self-consecration and in the poetic gift that was his to realize, in his own life and in his leadership of his people, what it meant to be "Jehovah's anointed."[1] The term was always a sacred one to him (cf. 1 Sam. xxiv, 6; xxvi, 9; 2 Sam. i, 14); it appealed to the poetic idealism of his nature and to his profound sense of accountability for the use of the distinction. With him this feeling went far beyond any care for the display or self-indulgence of royalty. It kept him humble and tender-hearted; it brought him back repentant from his grievous faults; it made him strongly sensitive against treachery and injustice; in a word, it put him by sincere love on a level with all grades and classes of his subjects. The Psalms ascribed to him are a reflection of all this. Such, in its fitting nuances, is the Davidic "note." It is as if he would take his beloved people into fellowship with him, that they might in music and song explore the values of life together; much as we see later when our Lord, as Son of Man, taught his disciples what the true man, man in type and adultness, must be and do.[2] In this sense his poetic work was truly Messianic.

Thus we find, as we look at the Psalms ascribed by title to David, that though we cannot certainly deem them his personal composition, we can call them Davidic. Their specific quality identifies them. This qualitative term "Davidic" stands for much more than Professor Cheyne credits it with; he says it is "but a symbol for a certain bold originality of style combined with a deeply devotional spirit."[3] It is indeed all this; but one cannot well miss also the intensely spiritual and individual note — tenderness with strength, humility with kingliness, loyalty to Jehovah,

[1] Or as the Hebrew word always is, "Jehovah's *messiah*."

[2] See below, pp. 541 f.

[3] Cheyne, "The Book of Psalms" (Parchment ed.), Introduction, p. xi.

with an indignation against treachery and hardness of heart which is essentially the cry of an outraged humanity. And this stamped itself indelibly on the Psalms that succeeded his time, giving them harmony of sentiment and tone and keeping the successive collections in the essentially Messianic rather than in the narrower dynastic or ecclesiastical line. This is suggestively shown, I think, in Books III to V, in the occasional Davidic pieces that were admitted after "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (Psa. lxxii, 20). The characteristic Davidic sentiment reappears; it is as if these pieces were put in to tone up what might otherwise be too conventional or too purely liturgical. It is like a return to the original keynote and leading idea when these tend to be obscured by later modulations. The lyric note must be true to its Davidic power and prophecy.

NOTE. It is interesting to observe how in the successive books of the Psalms occasional intercalated pieces, as it were landmarks, serve to keep the meaning and perpetuity of the Davidic line continuous. This Messianic promise could easily become dim and doubtful as the nation passed through vicissitudes of evil reigns, captivities, and the transition from monarchical to priestly government, but the spark of Messianism must not be wholly quenched. In Book I (after the individualized introduction, Psa. i) the second Psalm gives the sublime "decree," like the divine interpretation of the promise of 2 Sam. vii (cf. vss. 14–16), with its tremendous range of kingly destiny. This may be regarded as the keynote in its most vigorous and trenchant expression. There is no occasion to repeat this so long as the course of psalmody (in Books I and II) is set to it; though at the end of Book II (after the reiterated Davidic faith, lxi, 6, 7) the Solomonic Psalm, lxxii, describes the ideal passage of the Davidic spirit from father to son (cf. lxxii, 6, 7 with 2 Sam. xxiii, 3, 4). In Book III, which is made up from the works of other psalmists, with only one "prayer of David" (lxxxvi), and which moves in part under the shadow of invasion and captivity, the last piece in the book, a "Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite," repeats in glowing terms the promise and perpetuity of the Davidic throne (lxxxix; cf. especially vss. 3, 4, 19–23), — a fitting culmination to a book gathered out of the middle ages of the Hebrew monarchy. Book IV,

a purely liturgical collection, contains two Davidic psalms, both in the key of humble devotion. Book V, also liturgical, and mostly in the key of praise, attributes no fewer than fifteen psalms to David; the most notable of which, Psa. cx, reads like a supplement to Psa. ii, but gives the Messianic king a new office, that of eternal priesthood, "after the order of Melchizedek," — a remarkable recognition of the undying Davidic sovereignty at a time when the whole government was in the hands not of a king but of a priesthood. Thus in all periods of psalmody the latent Messianism of Israel is felt and reflected in song.

The Musical and Literary Disposal

Of the one hundred and fifty Psalms making up the five books, fifty-five are in the superscription designated as "For the chief musician," or leader of the choir, all but eleven of these being in the first and second books where the Davidic Psalms predominate. All of these eleven designations are appended to Psalms attributed either to David or to the older psalm writers Asaph and the sons of Korah, the former named of whom is mentioned in Chronicles as a contemporary of David (1 Chron. xv, 19). This would seem to indicate that at a time when the choral service of the Temple was fully organized these Psalms were brought in from ancient collections or sources, and perhaps adapted, to serve as classical material among later pieces whose choral or liturgical use was taken for granted. It was as when Handel took Isaian prophecies which before had been read or chanted — "And the glory of the Lord" or "He shall feed his flock" — and set them to the immortal choral music of "The Messiah." How these poems had been rendered before this disposal of them does not appear. Set to music they doubtless were, being so many of them Davidic, but in a more primitive way; and many of them may have been current in private use as closet poems or prayers.

Among the older Psalms designated "for the chief musician" are a number of notes and directions, musical or literary, some of them already so archaic at the time of the final compilation that their meaning could only be guessed at.

They appear in our English versions in untranslated form. It would serve no purpose to dwell upon them here, further than to mention in a note one or two points of special musical interest. All the notes of this sort are prefixed to Psalms ascribed to David, Asaph, or the sons of Korah, — a fact which shows how inseparable from the first were words and music (and, indeed, music of a popular sort) in this heritage from the royal "sweet Psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. xxiii, 1).

NOTE. *The Musical Disposal.* One Psalm (xlvi) has the direction "set to Alamoth," that is, to women's voices (cf. 1 Chron. xv, 20); two (vi, xii), "set to the Sheminith," or octave, that is, to men's voices (cf. 1 Chron. xv, 21); seven (iv, vi, liv, lv, lxi, lxvii, lxxvi, all but two Davidic), "on stringed instruments" (Heb. *neginoth*); and one (v), "with the Nehiloth," conjectured to be wind instruments. These directions, though early, are technical.

A further fact of interest, which seems to be illustrated by David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i, 18 (see above, p. 67), may be quoted from W. R. Smith ("The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 190): "A curious and interesting feature in the musical titles," he remarks, "in the earlier half of the Psalter is that many of them indicate the tune to which the Psalm was set, by quoting phrases like Aijeleth hash-shahar (xxii), or Jonath elem rechokim[1] (lvi), which are evidently the names of familiar songs. Of the song which gave the title Al-taschith, 'Destroy not' (lvii, lviii, lix, lxxv), a trace is still preserved in Isa. lxv, 8. 'When the new wine is found in the cluster,' says the prophet, men say, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.' These words in the Hebrew have a distinct lyric rhythm. They are the first line of one of the vintage songs so often alluded to in Scripture. And so we learn that the early religious melody of Israel had a popular origin, and was closely connected with the old joyous life of the nation. In the time when the last books of the Psalter were composed, the Temple music had passed into another phase, and had differentiated itself from the melodies of the people."

The literary disposal, especially of individual Psalms, is somewhat indefinite by our modern standards, owing to the looser observance of the lyric theme. The "single thought,

[1] That is, "Hind of the Dawn," "Dove of the Distant Terebinths," evidently well-known secular melodies.

feeling, or situation" desiderated in Professor Palgrave's standard [1] overflows its bounds and covers a larger devotional mood. Such terms as "a song," "a prayer," "a praise," are clear enough but not at all specific; untranslated terms like maschil, michtam, shiggaion,[2] are less reducible to singleness of idea. Two of the Psalms, one (xlix) by the sons of Korah, the other (lxxviii) by Asaph, are made more definitely didactic by being put in the *mashal*[3] style (cf. xlix, 4; lxxviii, 2). One Psalm (cxxxvi), with its constant refrain, is obviously an antiphonal anthem. Otherwise the internal sentiment of the Psalms, as, for instance, in the Hallelujah groups toward the end, must be left to speak for itself.

The Hebrews' idea of complete and finished verse form, to which perhaps their conception of a rounded thought structure corresponded, seems to our modern taste strangely arbitrary and artificial. It is founded on their alphabet of twenty-two letters, and results in acrostic poems, "in which the initial letters of successive half verses, verses, or larger stanzas make up the alphabet." [4] In our English versions this structure does not appear except in Psalm cxix, which not unlikely was regarded, in its time of matured legalism, as the supreme masterpiece of this kind of composition. In the original text, however, no fewer than thirteen such poems are found, eight of them being Psalms, ranging from the Davidic type to the late Hallel or Hallelujah.[5] One seems to detect in these a certain conventionalism of effect, though not so marked as materially to flatten the devotional or artistic note.

[1] See above, p. 434.

[2] Maschil, by etymology, seems to mean "[a psalm of] instruction" (well borne out in lxxviii); michtam (six times occurring) and shiggaion (Psa. vii in singular, Hab. iii, 1 in plural, as designating a class or setting) are of uncertain meaning.

[3] For the *mashal* in native literary forms, see above, pp. 68, 69.

[4] W. R. Smith, Old Testament in the Jewish Church, p. 182.

[5] Psa. ix–x, xxv, xxxiv, xxxvii, cxi, cxii, cxix, cxlv.

The most charming and, so to say, domestic section of the whole Psalter, perhaps, occurs in Book V, just after the huge and formal bulk of Psalm cxix. It is the group of poems, cxx to cxxxiv, called Songs of Degrees in the King James version, of Ascents in the Revised, — lit. "songs of the steps." What specific employment or occasion they connote is a matter of varied conjecture; the prevailing opinion holds them to be songs chanted by pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem at the numerous feast times which were observed in the matured Judaism (cf. Psa. cxxii), — a custom which had a parallel in the reading of the little classics, or Megilloth, on these festival occasions.[1] One likes to think so. One is gratified to find this whole Book V, the latest compiled, of which these songs are a characteristic feature, so well rounding out the long utterance of the nation's lyric soul by gathering materials new and old to meet the spiritual needs of a time of settledness and abiding, when law and liturgy and domestic sentiment were ripened into peace and harmony. Of this state of things these Songs of Ascents, sandwiched between the austere cultus and the exuberant Hallel elements, are a fitting symbol. Their origin is less clear. They were evidently introduced into the book as a group, from an earlier source. Five of them, indeed, are by title ascribed to David and Solomon. My opinion is that their first compilation (and, in part, composition) fits best with the later years of King Hezekiah, whose reign had weathered the suspense and pang of the Assyrian invasion, and who after his wonderful recovery from a mortal illness was minded to devote himself to the choral service of the Temple (cf. 2 Kings xx, 5, 8; Isa. xxxviii, 19, 20).[2] It would take little if any modification to fit the devout sentiments of the earlier era to the later, for the psalm elements of both are deeper than specific events.

[1] See below, pp. 482 f.

[2] Connect this with what is said above, pp. 198–201.

II

Proverbs: Garnered Counsel from the Wise. Like the Book of Psalms, the Book of Proverbs is a collection of literary utterances signalized by a royal name and yet confessedly the work of many authors, named or nameless. The name Solomon prefixed both to the whole book (Prov. i, 1) and to the most characteristic section of it (x, 1) is rather a class term than one of authorship; the book's distinctive contents being mashals of a specific kind which the phrase "of Solomon," or, as we should say, Solomonic, defines.

NOTE. Much of the preliminary discussion pertaining to the Book of Proverbs has already been given in Chapters I and II, above. The *mashal*, its unit of expression, is explained on pages 68–70; Solomon's traditional connection with song and mashal in the Scripture books ascribed to him, on page 85; and the broader subject of the Wisdom Strain and the Sages, on pages 92–96. The supplementary section of Hezekian proverbs (Prov. xxv–xxix), with remarks on the vogue of Wisdom literature in the time of Hezekiah and Isaiah, is treated on pages 202–204.

No book of Scripture seems to reveal more clearly than does this Book of Proverbs the steps and stages of its literary progress; not in time, indeed, for there are few if any indications when particular proverbs or groups of proverbs became current, but in the gradual shaping and refining of its chosen vehicle of expression, the mashal. Its literary art is more self-conscious than that of other books, more mindful not only of what is said but of how it is said, in word and phrase. The thought-texture of the book, although its maxims are so detached and miscellaneous, is eminently homogeneous both with itself and with the rest of Scripture; it is in the workmanship that one traces a reflection of different periods and perhaps different schools or guilds of proverb literature.

"The last thing that we find in making a book," says Pascal, "is to know what we must put first." The remark

applies aptly to the process apparent in the Book of Proverbs by which a multitude of apothegms, of different ages and schools, were fused into the unity and organism of a book. The first section, comprising chapters i to ix, was evidently the latest (unless we except the last two chapters) to be added to the collection; and this was clearly not compiled from earlier sources but composed as a kind of introduction to and commendation of the whole. It is in this section, accordingly, that we look for the focal idea of the book, the ruling truth to which all its detached maxims have a more or less intimate relation.

The Shaping of a Book of Wisdom

That focal idea we find in the Hebrew conception of Wisdom, which, as already remarked,[1] was to the Hebrew mind what philosophy was to the Greeks and is to us. If, however, the name is applicable to it at all, it is to be regarded as philosophy of a peculiar kind, as a view of life which connotes certitude rather than speculation, which does not deduce truth but asserts it, and whose nature may be roughly symbolized in its chosen term, "Wisdom," the thing itself, as distinguished from "Philosophy," the love of the thing. It deals accordingly with such values of life as will bear such absolute statement, practical elements of character and conduct which require rather to be enforced or enlivened than to be discovered. It is the truth fitted to the man who is sincere, teachable, right-minded; it is in the most wholesome sense the gospel of prudence, sagacity, success.

To a modern mind the outstanding feature of this Wisdom is the entire harmony it assumes between the secular and the religious, the intellectual and the moral. It is in unison with the great Hebrew ideal of right living. To be wise is to be righteous; to be wicked is to be a fool.[2] Or to put it

[1] See above, p. 94, and cf. p. 37. For an informal discussion of Wisdom I may perhaps refer the reader to my book on "The Hebrew Literature of Wisdom in the Light of To-Day," chaps. i, iii.

[2] Cf. above, p. 95.

in the theme proposition of the book, as propounded just after the preface (i, 7), which for proper emphasis may be expressed:

> The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge;
> They are fools who despise wisdom and instruction.

This initial proposition, setting forth the theme in contrast, is worth a moment's further notice, as the same assertion is repeated in slightly varied wording both in Proverbs and in other Wisdom books, and, indeed, may be regarded as the fundamental principle, the Newtonian law — so to speak — of the Wisdom cult. At ix, 10, its wording is

> The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom;
> And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

So one might go on to cite Prov. xv, 33 (original Solomonic), Psa. cxi, 10 (late liturgical), reaching its classical expression in Job xxviii, 28:

> Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
> And to depart from evil is understanding,

which merely states the principle that Job vindicated with his life (cf. Job i, 1). Even Ecclesiastes, in his later ventilation of Wisdom, makes the sum of manhood fearing God and keeping His commandments (Eccl. xii, 13). Jesus Sirach, the apocryphal sage, constantly emphasizes it. With this fundamental assertion goes the constant implication that wisdom, or righteousness, is in the way to salvation and wickedness, or folly, in the way to ruin (cf. xi, 31), — an implication which plays a strong part in the controversies of the Book of Job. All this shows wisdom not as a divisive force but coördinate and coöperative. It is at one with the other lines of religion and culture. Thus we see the sage, the prophet, and the priest, fraternal workfellows in the same conception of life, viewing it merely from slightly different angles and fitting it to their respective circles.

The Hebrew mind is not abstract and logical but concrete and visualizing. Figurative speech, imagery, is its native element. Hence in chapters ii to vi Wisdom is set forth not in an ordered system but under the simple concept of a priceless treasure, which is counted over, as it were, and in many phases urged upon the young man, the venerable sage speaking as a father. Such, so to speak, is the typical wisdom pose. This to begin with (cf. i. 8, 9). But soon a bolder figure takes form and growth in the author's mind, a magnificent personification, or allegory, the sublimest in Scripture, in which Wisdom — Our Lady Wisdom let us call her — is heard to speak for herself. First introduced in a somewhat austere exhortation (i, 20–33), at her next entrance she puts on an ineffable dignity and loveliness (viii), as a kind of foil to her loathly rival the "foolish woman," the too literal temptress of heedless young manhood (cf. vii, 6–27). It is the Scripture parallel to the famous Choice of Hercules described in Greek mythology. The passage in which Our Lady Wisdom describes her origin and station (viii, 22–31), almost as if she were divine, is the nearest Old Testament parallel to the Logos idea of the New Testament (cf. John i, 1–14), but of course far removed from it.

How Wisdom is Set Forth

> When He appointed the foundations of the earth,
> Then I was by Him, as a nursling;
> And I was daily all delight,
> Playing always before Him,
> Playing in His habitable earth,
> And my delights are with the sons of men.[1]

Once more she appears, in her seven-pillared house (ix, 1–12), not in contrast but in noble rivalry to the false woman Folly (vss. 13–18), disdaining not, for purity's and virtue's sake, to imitate the arts and allurements so often and foully abused.

[1] I use here the translation of the Jewish version.

So, by portraying this majestic womanly figure, the author, representing the Wisdom traits as it were in living poise and action, creates and maintains the grand unity of the Book of Proverbs. It is one of the most elaborate pieces of literary skill and art in the Old Testament.

Nor is this skill and art less apparent in the rest of the book. Let us note how this is. The preface to the whole collection (i, 2–6), first giving a kind of analysis of the book's object and audience, ends with a similar analysis of the mashal, its unit of wording and phrase (vs. 6), naming thereby what resolves into a double object of this literary form:

Art and Aim of the Proverb

> To understand a proverb, and a figure,
> Words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

In this couplet we note four terms, two of them general and two specific. The general terms, the first in each line, designate the vehicle of expression as regards its form (mashal, translatable "proverb," as here, or "parable"[1]) and as regards its practitioners ("words of the wise," or sages). The specific terms "figure" and "dark sayings" are in the margin rendered "interpretation" and "riddles," and seem to convey the idea that the double object of the mashal is, so to speak, to shed both light and darkness; that is, to make things clear enough to satisfy first thought and deep or intricate enough to rouse curious or labored thinking. There is a very practical literary principle here. It is the principle that valuable things are worth labor according to their value, and that what is cheaply obtained is cheaply held. Hence into the elucidating thing which contains the writer's idea it is desirable to inject an enigma element which stimulates the reader's thinking, thus making him do his proportionate share in appreciating and appropriating the idea. This principle it is that underlies the mashal, or proverb. By its

[1] See above, p. 68, for the meaning of the mashal.

clear discrimination or luminous imagery it conveys a thought; by its epigram or half-truth or paradox or odd association of ideas it sets the reader thinking and solving, stimulates his active mental powers, and gives him something to ponder and remember.

That this art and aim of expression has not only an intellectual but a spiritual value is seen in the use which our Lord in his teaching made of the parable, which is merely a developed phase of the mashal. He employed this method deliberately, as he said, in order that his hearers might "see and yet not see" (cf. Matt. xiii, 10–13), and his appeal was to him "that hath ears to hear." It was like the Second Isaiah's call to "bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears" (Isa. xliii, 8). Our Lord's method was to state some analogical truth which had all the clearness of a familiar scene or story and yet all the spiritual depth of a "dark saying," — to which, therefore, the hearer must make spiritual adjustment, like resolving an enigma, before he could understand it. The art and aim of the Solomonic proverb shows all this in literary type and germ as applied to the ordinary management of life.[1]

The Successive Deposits

Although the opening section, chapters i to ix, gives to the miscellaneous mass of proverbs the unity of the large Wisdom idea, the Book of Proverbs remains, after all, rather an aggregation than an organized book. It is made up of successive deposits, which contain no signs of chronological date or sequence, but seem rather to have been gathered from different guilds or sages, and perhaps assembled at one editing. The proverbs are Solomonic in the same sense that the Psalms are Davidic, Solomon's judicial mood of sagacity and wise observation of life prevailing here as did David's lyric mood of prayer and praise in the Book of Psalms. It is not in the nature of the

[1] For the art and purpose of Jesus' teaching in parables, see below, pp. 548 ff.

subject matter to take the articulation, the coördination, the movement of a system or treatise. Its tone is what one would expect to hear from an aged and venerable sage who could recall his honored days, —

> When I went forth to the gate unto the city,
> When I prepared my seat in the broad place,
> The young men saw me and hid themselves,
> And the aged rose up and stood.[1]

It is the didactic tone of a wisdom that does not confine itself to national boundaries or sentiments; it is not in the idiom of Mosaic law or sanctuary chant or prophetic vision, and yet with all of them it is in perfect tune and accord, as it bears its share in the varied expression of the Hebrew mind.

NOTE. The following is a list of the successive deposits of proverbs, as indicated in the words of the book.

DEPOSIT I (Chapters i–ix):

"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, King of Israel."

[General title to the whole book, followed by preface, vss. 2–6, and by a nucleus mashal, vs. 7.]

DEPOSIT II (Chapters x–xxii, 16):

"The proverbs of Solomon."

DEPOSIT III (Chapters xxii, 17–xxiv, 22):

"Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise,
And apply thy heart unto my knowledge."

[Technical formula of Wisdom utterance, being the opening couplet of a preface, vss. 17–21.]

DEPOSIT IV (Chapter xxiv, 23–34):

"These also are sayings of the wise."

DEPOSIT V (Chapters xxv–xxix):

"These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied out."

DEPOSIT VI (Chapter xxx):

"The words of Agur the son of Jakeh; the oracle."

DEPOSIT VII (Chapter xxxi):

"The words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him."

[1] Job xxix, 7, 8.

What progress there is in the substance of the Book of Proverbs is to be traced rather in its manner than in its matter. The items of the matter are like so many casual remarks or *obiter dicta*, — each proverb being complete in itself, deriving no support or suggestion from the one before, making no preparation for the one succeeding. Nor do the supposedly later compilations reveal an appreciable advance in reflection or spiritual discovery. So far as the movement of subject matter is concerned the book may be regarded as a body of static Wisdom, every utterance of it a truth to itself. In the manner, however, that is to say, in the structure and style of the individual proverb, there is traceable a movement, a development, which may be briefly described as the mashal working itself free.

How the Mashal Worked itself Free

What is meant by this may be noted by any reader who follows the text with due attention to style, beginning of course at chapter x, where the older Solomonic proverbs begin. As a preliminary, however, it is to be remembered that the unit of expression adopted by the Solomonic sages was the parallelistic couplet, the native art-form of Hebrew poetry ;[1] which unit they proceeded to develop, according to their idea of making its expression at once lucid and cryptic,[2] into a couplet containing the maximum of suggestion, condensation, and epigrammatic point. The result, as compared with the ordinary Hebrew parallelism, was somewhat analogous to the so-called heroic couplet of Pope and Dryden as compared with the more steady flow of descriptive or dramatic blank verse. So by their skillful cultivation the mashal couplet became the artistic vehicle of the crisp, pointed, thought-provoking pronouncement desired in the conversion of a run-wild popular saying into a refined literary form. They had sought their material in the homely thought of the common people, such as expresses itself in

[1] See above, p. 64. [2] Cf. above, p. 452.

maxims, and their treatment of these maxims was like turning a rustic remark into verse, with the added endeavor to make the verse itself an adage.

NOTE. One sees the same tendency in the growth of popular sayings from prose expression to rhyme, rhyme being in modern literary sense much like the parallelism in the Hebrew. There is, for instance, a Spanish proverb, "Plow deep and you will have plenty of corn," which reappears in an English rhyme as

> Plow deep while sluggards sleep,
> And you will have corn to sell and keep.

In a similar way going back to the oldest proverb quoted in the Bible, "Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness" (1 Sam. xxiv, 13), one finds in the later Solomonic mashal a similar sentiment in couplet form, Prov. xxi, 10,

> The soul of the wicked desireth evil;
> His neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes.

So when the sages set out to teach the people useful moral lessons, instead of choosing the vehicle of heavy dissertation they employed the poetic couplet, realizing perhaps, as George Herbert has hinted in more modern days, that

> A verse may find him who a sermon flies,
> And turn delight into a sacrifice.

With this refinement of the form goes refinement of the thought. As soon as it steps beyond the homely folk consciousness it becomes more subtile, pliant, colorful, adaptable, in a word, from a rather stiff workmanlike mold in which the art, which is first crude and tentative, becomes severe and self-conscious, it gradually works itself free from trammels of form to the point where the verbal and phrasal art is swallowed up in the swing and flow of thought. Such, in a remarkable degree, was the literary progress traceable in the Book of Proverbs.

It is to be noted that the concise, single-couplet mashal, while useful for some phases of truth, is for others too limited. What it gains in point it loses in range and spontaneous flow. Accordingly, as it tackles broader or more

complex thinking it tends to escape its couplet tether and move more fully and freely, — as the French express it, from the *style coupé* to the *style soutenu*, from the abrupt to the sustained. Such is the tendency notable in the Book of Proverbs. It shows itself in two ways: in the phrasing and figuration of the mashal and in its increased length and range. This of course we are considering as a mere matter of style, but the substance too is profoundly influenced thereby; and it is interesting to trace how the Wisdom message, as it goes on to finer expression, seems to take on more persuasiveness and affability. Compare, for instance, the literary feel of chapter x, presumably the oldest, with that of chapters viii and ix, in which the portrayal of Wisdom culminates, and you can realize how the mashal has worked itself free.

NOTE. Let us try to indicate a little more consecutively how this movement toward greater freedom manifests itself in the course of the book and what, accordingly, is the reciprocal influence of form and substance.

1. The original Solomonic deposit, x to xxii, 16, is made up entirely of detached couplet proverbs.[1] This is the mold according to which the mashal appears, shaped and finished, in the smallest compass, a whole subject being thus rounded off and disposed of in two lines. In the middle of the section, however, one notices a gradual change in the relation of the second line of the parallelism to the first. Up to the end of the fifteenth chapter there has been a great predominance of the antithetic couplet, exemplified in the first proverb, x, 1,

> A wise son maketh a glad father;
> But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

In this form of contrast are set forth in a great variety of ways the inflexible oppositions of life — righteousness and wickedness, wisdom and folly, industry and sloth, open-mindedness and perversity, truthfulness and deceit, discreet speech and silly prating, mercy and cruelty, and the like — as it were the massive fundamentals of moral instruction adapted especially to the young. We can see herein the fitness of the antithetic

[1] Except xix, 23, which runs to three lines.

mashal. An antithesis is a kind of self-closing circuit; it says its say and returns on itself, telling that a certain contrast is so but not why or to what extent it is so. It is adapted, accordingly, to aspects of truth that do not need enlargement or enrichment but only sharp distinction.

From the sixteenth chapter onward, however, we come upon a like predominance of the so-called synthetic couplet; that is, a couplet in which the second line repeats or expands the thought of the first, as, for instance,

> He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
> And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,

a virtual repetition, or

> The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah,
> Searching all his innermost parts,

wherein the second line applies the metaphor of the first. This kind of couplet is not so blunt and uncompromising as the other, its circuit not so self-closed and exclusive; it seems to leave its initial assertion open to enlargement or modification or illustration. This is an evident gain in suppleness and freedom of expression.

2. A statement that can take one clause of explication can take more. The barriers, so to speak, are let down, and whatever is needed to make the thought rounded and complete can be added, whether in one line or more. The mashal, while still retaining the unit of parallelism, may go on to as many more couplets as seem necessary. Accordingly, as soon as we enter the next section (xxii, 17–xxiv, 22, with its appendix, vss. 23–34) the most immediate thing that we notice is a change and a variety in the length of the mashal. The prefatory passage, vss. 17–21, goes on to five couplets (ten lines), and the next mashal is a quatrain. This latter form, indeed, is a favorite one in this section, though couplets and other measures are interspersed. One poem about wine-drinking (xxiii, 29–35) extends to eighteen lines. In the appendix occurs a poem of eleven lines (xxiv, 30–34) about the sluggard, with a refrain; which latter, appended to a similar poem in the introductory section (vi, 6–11), suggests that the two passages were originally stanzas of one poem, which accidentally became separated. All this variety in the compass of the mashal, coupled with the fact that the abrupt antithesis has almost entirely given way to the synthetic couplet, is a telling indication of increased ease and freedom. A more affable mood, too, is shown in the fact that this section seems to be the first to introduce the personal call for attention which becomes the hallmark of wisdom utterance (xxii, 17; cf. i, 8; Psa. xlix, 1; lxxviii, 1; Isa. xxviii, 23).

3. With the Hezekian compilation, chapters xxv to xxix, which professes to be Solomonic, return is made for the most part to the couplet mashal, but with a difference showing another stage of the art. There is a greatly increased proportion of simile mashals; for example,

> As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
> So is good news from a far country.

Most of the similes in the Book of Proverbs, in fact, come in this section. The influence of this upon the thought is not difficult to estimate. The figurative expression makes a finer demand on the reader's appreciation and acumen, adding to the worth of the conception the zest of imagery. An effective simile is a kind of surprise. It does not deal in literal resemblance; it gives rather some one point in which things almost wholly different are wonderfully alike. The use of such figured language is thus a tacit bid for keenness of thinking, a tribute to the reader's fineness and justness of culture. Accordingly one may note that the proverbs of this Hezekian compilation go farther afield for their subject matter, bringing aspects of wisdom that lie out of the common range. Nor is this confined to the couplet mashal. There are also larger groups; it is in this section too that the beautiful little ten-line poem about husbandry is to be found (xxvii, 23–27). Thus the greater freedom of this section is largely æsthetic, an increased sense of beauty.

4. With the words of Agur the son of Jakeh (xxx), who was perhaps a foreigner, the workmanship becomes somewhat artificial and labored; nor does the thought as a whole reach so high a level of taste and value. A new form of proverb appears here, the so-called numerical mashal, giving numbered lists of things that have traits in common; for example, xxx, 29–31:

> There are three things which are stately in their march,
> Yea, four which are stately in going:
> The lion, which is mightiest among beasts,
> And turneth not away for any;
> The greyhound; the he-goat also;
> And the king against whom there is no rising up.

Even in his famous prayer, vss. 7–9, Agur enumerates the things he desires of God. There is only one other place in Scripture where the numerical proverb is used, and that is the passage, vi, 16–19, in the introductory section, where are named "six things which Jehovah hateth, yea, seven which are an abomination unto Him." And this is in a decidedly higher tone, as it were more Hebrew, than are Agur's numericals. If he has added to the freedom of the mashal, it is a kind of exotic freedom, not of the full tide.

5. More than two thirds of the words of King Lemuel, "the oracle which his mother taught him" (xxxi), are taken up with the alphabetic poem already mentioned, twenty-two couplets long, beginning,

> A worthy woman who can find?
> For her price is far above rubies,

and continuing in a lovely series of domestic traits. This concluding strain of the Book of Proverbs merits remark both for the perfection of its art and for the beauty of its substance. Expressed in that strange acrostic form which to the Hebrew mind represented the severest art in versification (something like our sonnet or stately ode), it is the most chaste and limpid specimen of that species of verse to be found in Scripture, — that perfection of art which conceals art.[1] As such it presents both in style and in substance the mashal wrought to highest sweep and freedom.

It is worth while to note, in our feeling of the increasing freedom and breadth as the Book of Proverbs goes on, how fitly the end, leaving its summarizing message with the woman and mother, answers to the poetic conception of the introductory section. Standing thus at the culmination of this manual of homely and practical wisdom, this woman section enshrines a chivalrous portrayal not unworthy of that adventurous personification, almost apotheosis, in which the Hebrew realism of imagination reached its highest mark. It is the noble literal of which the other is the conceptual type and figure, giving for the master of men (vss. 2–9) and the mistress of the household (10–31) — adult and self-controlled age — what the other gives for immature and teachable youth. Only one idealizing step beyond the capable woman, with her household gift of management and tender sway, is our Lady Wisdom in her seven-pillared mansion, entering the lists of alluring warfare against the false Madam Folly, — thus realizing something like the idea later expressed by Goethe at the close of "Faust,"

> The woman-Soul leadeth us
> Upward and on.

[1] For a list of acrostic Psalms see above, p. 446, footnote 5.

May we not regard this as an interrelation of end and beginning in which all the best elements of the book blend in one beauty and fullness?

The Crest of the Wisdom Wave

Like other strains of literature — the prophetic, the legalistic — the Wisdom strain had its curve of ascent, culmination, and gradual subsidence; and it is hard to say when it reached its highest point of vogue and popularity. This point would of course be much earlier than when the various deposits were assembled into a Book of Proverbs and the introduction commendatory was written. It would come at some time when the Wisdom way of thinking was so "in the air" that it threatened to monopolize men's regards, as if no other way of thinking could be tolerated. To my mind this seems likeliest to have been about in the time of Isaiah, when the men of Hezekiah were copying out the aftermath of Solomonic proverbs (Prov. xxv, 1). That some such situation existed there is an indication in Isa. xxviii, where the sentiment of the ruling classes comes into clash with the faith and insight of prophecy.[1] Isaiah is urging trust in the mystically revealed word of Jehovah as against reliance on man-made diplomacies. Seeing that he can make no headway against the "scoffers that rule this people that is in Jerusalem" (vs. 14), the prophet composes a discourse in the current Wisdom idiom (vss. 23–29) to show by a superior line of analogy that Jehovah no less truly than they is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom" (v. 29). He introduces his discourse by the accepted Wisdom formula (v. 23; cf. Prov. xxii, 17; see also Psa. xlix, 1–4; lxxviii, 1, 2), and for the word "wisdom" he makes use of the term *thushiyah*, which by this time seems to have become a kind of technical term to denote the human intuition in which men were placing unlimited trust as a guaranty of truth absolute. We may regard it as the sages' word to

[1] This has already been touched upon above; see pp. 203, 204.

designate the human initiative of intellect and sagacity, the earthly counterpart to authoritative revelation from above. Earlier in the present chapter this sense of endowment is noted as underlying the literary consciousness of this third canon division.[1] It was when the feeling was at its pristine height, and when its sagacious pronouncements were most popular, that Isaiah came into conflict with it — not, however, to denounce it but to reveal its limitations.

NOTE. Isaiah does not quarrel with this reliance on *thushiyah* or human intuition; rather he boldly makes Jehovah coöperate as an abler practitioner in the use of it. Micah, Isaiah's contemporary, uses the same word (Mic. vi, 9, where it is dimly translated "[the man of] wisdom") in evident appreciation of its value. In the older part of the Book of Proverbs it occurs only once (Prov. xviii, 1), apparently not yet stereotyped to a philosophical term. In the introductory section, however, it occurs three times (ii, 7; iii, 21; viii, 14), twice as "sound wisdom," promised to the upright and resolute disciple, and the third time as "sound knowledge," claimed by Our Lady Wisdom herself.

Both Isaiah and Micah seem thus to appeal to the Wisdom strain of culture as the prevailing one in their day, with intimation of its infirmity and of what ought to be made of it. In their view it was not keen to read aright the prophetic signs of the times; it was perhaps too hidebound and opportunist, too self-centered (cf. Prov. xviii, 1). We shall learn more of its limitations in the Book of Job. From Isaiah's time onward the Wisdom or worldly sentiment seems to have kept on in this same static way, as the common educative factor in the Hebrew national economy, until we hear the leaders of Jeremiah's time, in their dread of innovation, saying, "The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. xviii, 18). Wisdom had gained an established status as a strand in the threefold web of national guidance and culture.

[1] See "The Human Genius and Initiative," p. 428, above.

We have thus got a little glimpse of the Wisdom strain of thinking in its most popular days. The Book of Proverbs preserves for us its typical utterances, in their initial vigor, in their developing art, in their adventurous estimate of Wisdom meanings and values; utterances gathered from early times and from various guilds or centers, reflecting the practical working of the sound Hebrew mind in the everyday concerns of human experience and intercourse. And like the Book of Psalms it has taken its place, in its *genre*, as a leading world classic. No other collection of aphoristic writings approaches it for compass and cleanness and spiritual worth.

III

Job: Crucial Test of the Heart of Man. In the middle of our Bible, massive and majestic, stands a monumental work of the world's literature before which the sincere scholar can only stand with the awe of one who takes his shoes from his feet. It is the Book of Job. One's proper attitude toward it must needs be such as to justify the maxim of Goethe quoted elsewhere: "We really learn only from those books which we cannot criticize. The author of a book which we could criticize would have to learn from us." Job is beyond our criticism and our praise, but there are few if any books in the world from which we can learn such sublime and weighty things as its pages reveal.

NOTE. *A Modern Estimate.* Carlyle's estimate of the Book of Job, given with the fervid unction of a kindred spirit, has become a kind of classic pronouncement. Speaking, in his lecture on Mahomet,[1] of the Arabs and their land, he says:

"Biblical critics seem agreed that our own *Book of Job* was written in that region of the world. I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book! It is our first,

[1] "On Heroes and Hero-Worship," Lecture II. "The Hero as Prophet."

oldest statement of the never-ending Problem, — man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So *true* every way; true eyesight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual: the Horse, — 'hast thou clothed his neck with *thunder*?' — 'he *laughs* at the shaking of the spear!' Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind; — so soft, and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."

Literary Type and Structure

It is in the composition of the Book of Job, with its consistent correlation and progress of parts and plot, that the Hebrew literature approaches nearest in type and structure to the literature of other nations, especially to that of the Greeks, from whom our modern standards are derived. Whether this was due to conscious imitation is doubtful; the thing cannot be proved one way or the other. The main question, however, to which the book's suggestive analogies of form give rise, is, whether it is to be considered as essentially a drama, with scenario and distribution of characters, or a vehicle of controversy, something like a Platonic dialogue. This diversity of estimate comes from the different relative values accorded to its form, which is narrative and dialogue-wise, or to its inner substance, which from a short narrative prologue passes into a series of impassioned discourses on the profoundest problems of life. I am not sure, however, that this is the essential alternative. Another type of discourse seems to me worthy of consideration by the side of the dramatic — namely, the epic; this on account of the heroic spiritual achievements, as we may truly call them, of Job in his tremendous encounter with the mysterious dealings of God and the mistaken judgments of his friends. It is as if the patriarch's words were veritable deeds of valor and victory. Accordingly, in my studies of the book I have ventured to assign it to the epic type, — calling it for

distinction "The Epic of the Inner Life."[1] In so doing, however, I would not deny to it other elements. It is of no great importance, after all, whether it be called dramatic or epic; it has traits of both literary types, and either term has to be materially accommodated to fit its case.

All this, however, is only of the side and the surface. What is of real account is that, penetrating to the spirit of the poem, we forget considerations of literary deportment while with a sense of truly epic grandeur we trace the heroic uprise of the intrinsic heart of man, as Job, in utter honesty with himself, in clear-eyed assessment of things as they are, and in unshaken demand for the godlike, conquers his way through bafflements and falsities to light and vindication.

NOTE. The nearest classical parallel to Job is the "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus, which, though in dramatic form, embodies an epos. The following brief outline of the course of the story may aid in tracing the struggle of Job, the Hebrew Prometheus, to truth and light. I note five acts or stages, with their points of objective.

ACT I. To Job's blessing and curse, i–iii.

[The stroke devised and executed; the silent friends; Job's access of bewilderment.]

ACT II. To Job's ultimatum of doubt, iv–x.

[Wisdom misfit and insipid; the world-order a hardness and chaos; Job's plea for mutuality and mediation.]

ACT III. To Job's ultimatum of faith, xi–xix.

[The friends' false attitude: Job's life resolve of integrity; conviction that his Redeemer (next of kin) liveth.]

ACT IV. To Job's verdict on things as they are, xx–xxxi.

[No outward terms of profit and loss; yet wisdom still supreme; Job's life record ready for presentation.]

Act V. To the vindicating dénouement, xxxii–xlii.

[The self-constituted umpire fails; the whirlwind words display wisdom and power of creation; Job emerges to vindication and mediation.]

[1] I would here refer the reader to my book "The Epic of the Inner Life" (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston), pp. 20–26, for an explanation of the modified sense in which I have adopted the term.

If we let the book speak for itself, not trying to cramp its structure too rigidly either to a dramatic, an argumentative, or an epic model, we find its framework simple, consecutive, well articulated. In a workmanship quite beyond that of other Scripture books it reveals its occasion, its purpose, its motivation, its fitting solution. I regard the movement throughout as narrative, that of a story, having a developed plot with its proper involution and unfolding, — this notwithstanding the fact that it is carried on for the most part not by action and incident but by the give and take of speech. In other words, the action and its event are elements of an inner history. An introduction or prologue two chapters long (i, ii), a short interlude or transition (xxxii, 1–5), and a conclusion of eleven verses (xlii, 7–17), all in prose, suffice to indicate the setting and structure of the piece; the rest (iii, 1–xlii, 6), in a steady flow of impassioned poetry, gives, by the verbal encounter of several characters (including Jehovah Himself) with Job, the portrayal of human integrity, fidelity, and steadfastness for the sake of which this truly epic poem exists.

Note. The Book of Job, along with the Pentateuch and Isaiah, has come in for a generous share of surgical and destructive criticism, in the endeavor to determine what was its original scope. The rather prominent framework of three-times three rounds of speeches (iii–xxxi), embodying a debate, seems to have been quite generally assumed as the original nucleus, and the disposition has been to take this torso as a kind of treatise on "Why God punishes the righteous," or some such abstraction, — patching up the text in divers places to make the framework consistently mechanical; while the parts that have by critics of various caliber been put in peril thereby include such things as the epilogue, the Elihu portion, the twenty-eighth chapter, the descriptions of behemoth and leviathan, — not always sparing even the prologue and the address from the whirlwind. It is needless to say that the present study prefers, as in other cases, to read the Book of Job in its latest edition, presupposing that the author — or final editor, whoever he was, — had reason and warrant for publishing the book as it substantially is. It gives a better net result that way.

Origin and Authorship

Conjectures of the age in which the Book of Job was written have covered an extraordinary range of time, from the age of Moses or even earlier to the period of the Greek domination. On account of its patriarchal setting old-time scholars have deemed it the oldest book in the Bible; but this supposition went with the idea that the book is a record of chronicled history rather than a virtual epic or dramatic poem with its marks of creative invention and literary artistry. To assume this latter alternative, however, — namely, that instead of an annalistic report it is a literary creation, having for basis, if you please, an ancient Semitic *epos*, puts a quite different coloring upon the matter. It enables us in better measure to account not only for its primitive scene and setting but for its highly matured thought and art.

NOTE. The word "epos," as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is "a collective term for early unwritten narrative poems celebrating incidents of heroic tradition; the rudimentary form of epic poetry." One need not enlarge on the application of this definition here. It is sufficient to mention the Promethean epos underlying Æschylos's "Prometheus Bound," the Odyssean epos in Homer; the Eden epos underlying "Paradise Lost"; the Arthurian epos underlying Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," all of which embody central meanings for the soul of a race or a nation, and none more truly than our assumed epos of Job.

That something like a Job epos was known and influential at a very vital period of Israel's history is indicated by Ezekiel, in a passage already remarked upon in another connection. Speaking, in the early years of the Chaldean exile, of his people's chances for release, he says of the doomed homeland, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah" (Ezek. xiv, 14, 16, 20). Here Job, in an imputed character like that of the Book of Job, is ranked with Noah, an ancient hero common to Israelites and Chaldeans, and Daniel, a contemporary of

Ezekiel himself.[1] All three are adduced as personages of paramount significance as related to the destiny of Israel; and yet it is only here in Ezekiel that Job is mentioned at all outside of the book that bears his name, where, as it seems, the Job epos is wrought out in full.

This mention of Job, especially as on equal terms with Daniel, rouses curious inquiries. The story of Daniel, as we know, was written out many years afterward, in our Book of Daniel, and we can judge from that story why his exiled countrymen, aware of his wonderful success at court (cf. Ezek. xxviii, 3, for his reputed wisdom), would build great hopes on him. The tradition of Job, of which this mention in Ezekiel is the first trace, was afterwards written out in like manner into a work of literature. May there have been some idealized connection between the ancient epos and a contemporary personage on whom, in the circumstances of the time, it was natural to build hopes? How otherwise can we interpret Ezekiel's strong yet strange allusion?

I am inclined to think there was such a connection; and let me here give my conjecture for what it is worth. It looks to me as if the name "Job," on account of its connotations, may have been adopted by the Jewish elders (Ezekiel's words were to them; see Ezek. xiv, 1) to stand for another name which during Nebuchadnezzar's life it would not be safe or politic to use. I refer to their king Jehoiachin, still a king though a prisoner of state, who at the time of Ezekiel's mention was in the sixth year of his incarceration (cf. Ezek. viii, 1 with xx, 1). To make his name openly current, especially as associated with hopes of deliverance, might be perilous both to him and to them. To use the name "Job," with the understood sense of what it meant and whom, would be safe and richly symbolic. Thus the Job epos may have

[1] For Daniel's part in this strange trio of worthies, and its suggested relation to history, see above, pp. 284, 285.

come cryptically into the Jewish mind and polity, perhaps from some source discovered in Chaldea, and, having first been seized upon for the masking name it bore, may in course of time have been wrought by a master poet into the Book of Job.

This consideration would make the Book of Job a product of the exile period, which we have already found so pregnant of redemptive and prophetic forces. It connects itself with the view I have taken of the individualized Servant of Jehovah, as presented in the Second Isaiah; whom I have ventured to identify with the king who so patiently endured thirty-seven years of imprisonment and then, at Nebuchadnezzar's death, was released and held in honor among kings.[1] The similarity of experience and sentiment between the Book of Job and the Second Isaiah has been universally noted by thoughtful scholars. It is as if both works had been hewn from the same stratum of spiritual discipline and faith, as if underneath both were some personality of sublime masterliness and patience both to achieve and to suffer. Nowhere else in the Old Testament do we get so intimate an approach to a veritable hero of epic action and song.

As to the authorship of the Book of Job, to one who has conjectured thus far a further step of surmise is tempting, though it must needs be hazarded with guardedness and caution. It seems to come somehow from the heart of that imprisonment. It connotes some personal conflict and issue not invented but actual, — something added to the epos which was its symbol. "When we see the natural style," says Pascal, "we are quite astonished and delighted; for we expected to see an author, and we find a man." Nowhere in the Old Testament is the author more masterly, yet nowhere does the man so eclipse the author as in this Book of Job. Now as we look for the man of the Second Isaiah,

[1] For this personal identification of the Servant of Jehovah, with its Scripture grounds, see above, pp. 315–323.

we find one who in the midst of prison indignities seems to say of himself, "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (Isa. l, 4). If these words state something real under their poetry, there was a literary zeal and activity pressed out of that prison experience, something more, it would seem, than was incorporated in the words of the Second Isaiah. A remarkable passage also, xii, 17–xiii, 2, reads as if experienced and written by an eye-witness of the captivity and deportation. The similar firmness of attitude in xiii, 15–19 and Isa. l, 7–9 cannot well go unnoted as one compares the two books; it reads like one and the same personal mood. May not this Job epos, already brought so suggestively into the intimate hopes of Israel, have been wrought to epic form by a royal author, either in the prison years or in the time that followed his release? One can of course answer neither yes nor no; but one can ponder the fitness of the idea, putting the elements of the case together.

NOTE. Some of the most notable books of the world's literature have been written during imprisonment. Two may be here mentioned: Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and Cervantes' "Don Quixote." If we put the Book of Job by the side of these, we make its occasion far deeper and more far-reaching than theirs; we trace it to the heart of Biblical truth. The occasion is worthy and cogent.

The Cynic and his Carping Wager

In the study of a literary work so well put together as is this Book of Job it is important to get first at the main point of departure and to follow its lead as far as this is self-consistent. Such an outset is not lacking here. It is strongly marked, and the book's whole movement is governed from it. It is worded in Satan's cynical question of motive, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" (i, 9). To trace the answer of this question, as its wholesale insinuations are directed against men like Job, against

the accepted wisdom of life, against God's governance of the world, is to my mind the unitary purpose and business of the Book of Job. Other problems come in for solution by the way, for the vital radiations of the thought are many, but the large answer to this question encompasses them all. And the answer is made not in terms of a debate or of an ordered theory, but in the living terms of a man who is true to his sense of the divine and honest with himself. That is its sublimely epic quality.

Let us see how the situation reveals itself from this point of view.

The cynic spirit, here personified as the Satan or Accuser, gauging manhood by its selfish measure, sees in the best of men nothing intrinsically genuine, nothing higher than self-interest. Job, the man perfect and upright, who fears God and shuns evil (i, 1), is judged as simply a prudent business man. He serves God because it pays to be pious and good. His wealth, his prosperity, his renown, his happy household, his honored age, are so many elements of wage and reward. One might say it is not the real Job who is so pious, it is his possessions and comforts, which are like the proceeds of an investment. So sure is the Satan of this that he is ready to submit the proof of it to a wager. Take away these rewards, he urges, and Job will renounce a service that no longer yields returns. Such is his cynic measure of manhood and its motives; and God's acceptance of the wager evinces God's faith in human nature. Man is His own handiwork, created in His image; and He takes the risk of proving manhood true to its unseen Pattern and Type. So Job, unknown to himself, is made a spectacle to the ages, as the subject of an arbitrary experiment. His possessions are swept away, his children killed, and to crown all a leprous disease, elephantiasis, universally deemed the sign of the personal wrath of God — such was Satan's lie — reduces him to the extremity of wretchedness and suffering.

The cynic's indictment is shrewd and sweeping. Directed first against the integrity of human nature as typed in the person of Job, it makes him the concrete embodiment by which the experiment will stand or fall. But he is not the only object of attack. The prevailing Wisdom idea is also at stake, a static and stereotyped philosophy which has laid itself open to such imputation of motive. Nor does Jehovah Himself, who has made the pull of self-interest so safe and profitable, escape a cleverly insinuated censure. In sum, Satan — and many a like spirit since — is sure he has unearthed the vulnerable spot in the dealings of God with man and of man's response.

It is in order to raise this question of Satan's that the prose prologue, chapters i and ii, with its twin scenes in heaven and earth, is introduced. It is in order to meet and resolve its various thrusts of implication that the ensuing chapters of poetry, the true epic body of the story, are wrought into symmetry and form. We cannot enter here into an analysis of the poem; let us rather consider briefly the three lines of indictment just suggested, putting Job, however, not first but third.

Job's Encounter with the Wisdom Cultus

1. The friends of Job, who, on hearing of his affliction, come to condole and remain to condemn, represent according to their individual temperaments the current and conventional thinking of their day; and this, as the gist of their discussion reveals, is of the Wisdom mood and strain. Utterances of sages are frequently cited or referred to as drawn from venerable stores of precept (cf. viii, 8–10) with which the friends and Job alike are familiar. Job himself is as it were a sage among sages; his eminence in life has made him so (cf. iv, 1–5). In this respect the Book of Job is essentially a Wisdom book; its mashal type ("parable," cf. xxvii, 1; xxix, 1) being rather of the continuous than of the Solomonic mintage, connoting thus a riper and more organic stage

of development. It has in fact reached a stage where, as a stereotyped scheme of doctrine, it is ready for criticism and revision. Instead of the genial and discursive thing it began with, touching lightly on the practical thoughts and observations of experience, Wisdom has hardened into a solemn orthodoxy, and as such is charged, as orthodoxies are apt to be, with dogmatism and intolerance. In its attitude toward Job's affliction, as assumed by the friends, it betrays its attitude toward God and toward human life. And this — to say the least of it — is not of the heart but of the head. It is stranded in its own rigid theory of life, its narrow intellectualism.

With this hard, unsympathetic spirit of Wisdom it is that Job first comes into collision. Not that he has found its principles unsound, or that it has ceased to be a priceless asset of life (cf. *per contra*, xxviii); but as its familiar concepts are urged upon him, all with the same unfriendly implication, they sound insipid, stale, pointless, the merest "proverbs of ashes" (cf. vi, 6, 7; xii, 1–3; xiii, 1, 2, 12). Somehow Wisdom, good as it is for theoretic and academic standards, has failed to touch the heart of this unique experience. Its fitness, its application, is lacking (cf. xvi, 1–5).

Consider how this was brought about. It began with the friends' deductions from Job's case, — deductions in strict accord with their Wisdom ideas. In their naïve philosophy of cause and effect the sages had made a mechanical thing of it. Identifying wisdom with righteousness and folly with wickedness, they had linked reward infallibly with the one and ruin as infallibly with the other, leaving no room for exceptions.[1] They had stereotyped this idea into a law of life, which to their thought was so clear that they made it work both ways. If righteousness spelled reward and wickedness ruin, then when you see reward you see the righteousness that bought it, and when you see ruin you see

[1] Cf. remark, p. 449, 450, above.

the penalty of wickedness. In Job's affliction they saw ruin, not only what might have been attributed to chance but that aggravated ruin which meant the immediate wrath of God. Behold then the unspeakable wickedness of the man. God had said it, and that was enough. The human mind must echo God's mind, and say it too.

Accordingly, after a season of dismay over Job's condition, so enigmatic to him, so lucid to them, the friends, whose felt cue was to withhold sympathy where God had withheld favor, entered upon their well-meant mission of convincing Job of wrongdoing and urging him by repentance and submission to secure God's favor again. Their object for themselves is to prove their orthodoxy true, for him to restore the conventional elements of reward and favor on their terms. What they urge is worthy and noble, — granted their point and plane of view. But they do not take account of the real fact, namely, Job's integrity; and as they go on they push their theory to an absurd extreme. It is just here that Job's encounter with them becomes heroic and in the end triumphant. He is not mourning over his losses or longing for the restoration of goods and family and health. From the disease that wastes him he can expect only death. But living or dying he must be honest with himself and with life. And he has done nothing to deserve this affliction. To repent when there is no occasion would be an insincerity. To submit to his affliction as if it were deserved would be submitting to an injustice. To do these things on the score of wisdom would be to give wisdom a false and selfish motive. It would be like currying favor with God. Nay, in his controversy with the friends he brings their attitude to just this insincere pass (xiii, 7–11). They are pushing their wisdom to false views of God. Thus his encounter with the Wisdom cultus, as it is held in his day, lays it open to something very like Satan's sneer of the beginning, "Doth Job — doth any man — fear God for nought?" And while

he thus finds the weak point in the Wisdom motive he grandly belies the cynic's sneer as regards himself. He is not serving God and shunning evil for a price. His loyalty to the godlike is a thing intrinsic. It belongs as truly to manhood as it does to manhood's Creator.

Such is the answer that Job's response to affliction gives to Satan's sneer about the motive of Wisdom. While it searches this motive out with unsparing insight it does Wisdom an inestimable service by lifting it, as it were, above itself into the sphere of selfless manhood.

2. While Satan's wager is fastened on the person of Job as the concrete embodiment of the test, it is no less truly directed, albeit slantwise, at the Divine order of the world, the order which has elicited such response of Wisdom. He follows up his question, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" with the further taunt, "Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land" (i, 10). As much as to say God has ordered His dealings with mankind on a system of exchange, of barter. If Job's piety and righteousness are his shrewdly calculated means of buying God's favor, no less evidently God's favor, as expressed in protection and prosperity, is also in the market buying Job's allegiance. On this score there is nothing to hinder a cynic, judging by his own evil heart, from censuring the whole Divine order, with its imputed arrangement of rewards and punishments, as a refined and clever commercialism, wherein God and man, in watchful detachment from each other, are engaged each in humoring an essential self-interest. The Wisdom motive, as we have just seen, is susceptible to such criticism. God Himself, so judged, does not escape Satan's implication of being the abetter of such a world scheme. Perhaps that is why He so promptly agrees to the wager, though, as He

Job's Rectified Sense of the Divine Order

admits, unjustly (cf. ii, 3; ix, 17). He has faith that Job will stand the tremendous test and be true to essential God-likeness; and if Job, then the manhood of which he is the chosen type. More than this: if so, then man as man has it in him to discover and adopt a better order of things, a higher Wisdom than barter. For, as we shall see, the Book of Job is steered toward this. And so here too the cynic's wager will fail.

The answer to this implication of Satan's question comes from two sources: Job's sturdy remonstrance, and the words spoken from the whirlwind. It is, so to speak, an answer in which human intuition (*thushiyah*) and Divine revelation have equal and complementary shares, — as it were a negative and an affirmative fitted to each other.[1]

The negative element — what the Divine order is *not* — is involved in Job's bewildered interrogation of his unmotived affliction. A sage among sages, expert in Wisdom lore, until this experience came he had never interpreted God's dealings with man otherwise than as the accepted Wisdom philosophy dictated. It had seemed ideally clear and adequate in his "autumn days, when the friendship of God (*sōd*, "the intimacy") was over his tent" (xxix, 4). But now that the supposed Divine stroke was upon him, the first thing to fail him was friendship, sympathy, fellow feeling (cf. vi, 14–23). All the sweet relationship between man and man, so far as mere Wisdom could interpret, had become a cold, unfeeling, impersonal thing, blind to the best values of life. But that was only the beginning. God too, on his hitherto-held theory, was mysteriously, cruelly estranged. No scheme of right and wrong, of justice and guilt, of sin and righteousness, could account for it. An arbitrary injustice had been done (cf. ix, 17), an outrage to his reason and sense of personal relationship, and he could ascribe it to no one but God. Yet he would not join with

[1] Cf. note, p. 462, above.

his friends and call it justice and desert. No; rather, letting them entreat or rave as they would, he addressed his remonstrance straight to God, in a terrific indictment of His world order (ix) which one might call blasphemous if one did not reflect that it was urged in the behalf of the Godlike. A God who will so treat the creatures of His hands, and give them no clue to the reason why, is acting out of character (cf. x, 8–17). From this indictment, which has primary relation to himself, a righteous man suffering as if he were wicked, he goes on later to the question which puzzled many pious observers of old, why the wicked were prospered in life apparently without reference to Divine laws of reward and penalty (cf. Psa. xvii, 13–15; xxxvii; xlix; lxxiii). He lays it more to heart than do the Psalmists and the friends. These have explanations that satisfy them, either pious or savage; but it dismays him to contemplate the seeming contradictions of the Divine order as interpreted on principles of orthodox Wisdom (xxi; xxiv). Honest with himself, he is no less honest to fact, to things as they are, though the contemplation of them leaves him utterly bewildered as to God's dealings with His world. Yet all the while his plea is for the just, the open, the friendly; his honesty is Godlike; he is drawing near to the true solution though as yet his eyes are holden. And one thing is becoming clear: God is not buying man's allegiance at a price; that can no more hold than that man at a price can buy God's favor. The hard old order which Job once believed in and to which the friends still cling is ready for rectification; Job himself, in his person, is besieging God's judgment seat for something more divine, more human (cf. xxiii, 2–7).

The affirmative answer, which after men's arguments have spent themselves comes eventually to meet both Satan's criticism and Job's longing surmise, is contained in the words of God from the whirlwind, chapters xxxviii to xli. These majestic chapters, among the sublimest in all

Scripture, seem at first impression to answer nothing, and yet as the impression deepens they answer everything. They are like a cadence to the whole strain of the Book of Job, modulating from the stormy discords of controversy and the plaintive notes of woe to the large harmonies of a full-ordered world. It is the calm response of Divine revelation, indeed, but of the revelation that is going on all the while to those whose eyes can see, — not magic or miracle, not the exceptional things that one individual can claim, but the orderly ongoings of nature, full of a fathomless wisdom and power, in the reign of which earth and sea and sky, with their endlessly varied life and function, are adjusted to one supreme Will and to one another, so that every creature is free to live its own peculiar life and find its individual purpose in the sum of things. Such a revelation is open always and to all. It finds Job first, who feels his littleness before so vast a panorama of wisdom and power and his presumption in daring to question it (xl, 3–5). The opening of his eyes is the opening of a contrite heart, whose response is (xlii, 5, 6):

> I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
> But now mine eye seeth thee:
> Wherefore I abhor myself,
> And repent in dust and ashes.

It finds the friends not in any disposition to avail themselves of it but in speechless terror that God should speak at all; and it is through Job's intercession that they come at last to the sense of forgiveness and favor. "For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right," is the Divine summary, "as my servant Job hath" (xlii, 8). Even those indicting remonstrances of his, it would seem, so fearless of pain and darkness and death, were included in "the thing that is right." They were aimed right, and out of a Godlike heart; the rest was incidental. And as for the cynic's slant-wise gibe, that God was virtually buying Job's allegiance; there is no room for that any more.

3. After all is said and summed, however, the supreme meaning of the book before us is Job himself, the man Job, "perfect and upright" in devout manhood, and in spite of uttermost trial remaining so. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord," is St. James's comment (James v,11), the appreciative note of a brother of our Lord whose epistle may be not unfitly regarded as the New Testament book of Wisdom[1] (cf. James iii, 17). "The patience of Job," — or, as one might say, consistency with himself and with the proved wisdom of life. In other words, in this Book of Job is drawn the full-length portrait of manhood, true, fearless, steadfast, measuring itself in extreme test with the mind of the universe, human, demonic, divine, and coming out on equal and victorious terms. It is the triumph of human personality, as it answers to its possibilities in the image and likeness of its Creator.

How the Wager was Won

It is this masterly portrayal that makes the Book of Job what may be called the pivotal book of the Old Testament dispensation, the book wherein human intuition and divine revelation meet in a hard-won and well-won coöperation, seeing eye to eye.

NOTE. That valued endowment of *thushiyah* — intuitive wisdom —which we have noted in Proverbs and elsewhere plays a considerable part in the thought of the Book of Job, the word occurring five times. In v, 12, Eliphaz makes it inconsistent with craftiness. In vi, 13, Job, in the thick of his bewilderment, complains that it is driven away from him. In xi, 6, Zophar praises it as a twofold insight. In xii, 16, Job ascribes it to God as does Isaiah xxviii, 29. In xxvi, 3, Job denies it by ironical implication to the pedantic Bildad. The use of the word seems to mark the golden time of the Wisdom cultus, when the sages felt an element of mysticism in it; in the later stages as represented in Ecclesiastes and others this phase of it seems to have passed; cf., for instance, Eccles. vii, 24. It is Job's use of his experience, in fact, which proves the reality and genuineness of *thushiyah*.[2]

[1] Cf. below, p. 636.

[2] Cf. note, p. 462, above.

The astonishing thing in the wager that brings this about is that God should lend Himself so readily to a game of chance, — as if to Him, as to Satan, Job's conduct were a matter of hazard and guesswork. Natural enough to an unprincipled, unattached spirit like Satan, it does not look beseeming to God; He ought, one would think, to be surer of His own handiwork. But — if one may dare say a thing so anthropomorphic of God — His consent to Satan's experiment was not a gamble. It was a faith. He had faith in the essential Godlikeness of human nature, a certitude that Job was loyal not for reward or self-appeasement but because it was *in him* to be loyal to the Godlike. The Godlike was his truer element. If the experiment proved this true, then the severity of the test, instead of breaking Job down, would but affirm in deeper and surer terms the intrinsic worth of his manhood.

And that is how the wager was won. The agreement in heaven, we will remember, was outside the scene; it was Job who, all unwittingly, won it by the confirmed integrity of his own human personality. The successive strokes of his affliction as they fell found him steadfast and loyal in spite of wife's reproach and life's utter closure. So far as Satan's part was concerned, the wager was won speedily: the human in Job had won it. So far as God's share of the experiment was concerned, however, it was only just begun. It was the Godlike in Job that more than won it. The failure of friends, the futility of the conventional notions of Wisdom, the hard sense of God's dealings urged upon him by friends and suffering alike, spurred the Godlike in Job to a sturdy creativeness. Out of the blank denial that seemed everywhere to have blighted the face of being he gradually shaped an Everlasting Yea. His creative unit was the imperative demand for sympathy, mutualness, sincerity, in the free relations of life, — the thing wherein the friends failed him (cf. vi, 14–30; xii, 4, 5; xix, 13–22), nor human

friends only but the whole divine-human order of things (ix, 1–12). He could not bear that this should be remote, one-sided, arbitrary. Accordingly, as human friendships and theories failed, his heart began to reach out, as by timid tentacles, toward a sympathy which would not fail, a responsive heart which somewhere, somehow, would accord him justice and understanding. This, I think, is the main surge of Job's constructive spirit, an intuition based on his own consciousness of right and mercy (ix, 21–24). Beginning with the sense of what is not but ought to be, a personal medium of exchange (ix, 32–35), his longing shapes itself into a plea (xiii, 20–22), then grows in clearness and certitude until the imaged umpire (ix, 33) is believed in as a witness on high (xvi, 19–21) and then strongly asserted as his Redeemer (xix, 25–27, *go'el*; lit. "next of kin") in consequence of whose advocacy God will no more be a stranger. On this uprise of the Godlike in man toward the manlike in God hangs all the rest of Job's complaint and ideal. As he identifies his disease with the immediate stroke of God his appeal is from the God arbitrary and ruthless to the God compassionate and friendly (x, 3–7). As his leprous body draws near the grave, with no hope of vindication on this side, he endeavors to turn the negative analogies of nature into a suggestion of life beyond (xiv, 7–17); but whether this may be affirmed or not, his final words proclaim him ready to enter upon it bearing before God the record of his earthly life with the pride of a prince (xxxi, 35–37). Thus, as we may say, the potent surge of the Godlike in Job's personality rises above earthly hardness and falsity and *creates* the thing that ought to be, the coöperative sympathy and fellowship wherein God and man respond to each other in freedom of spirit. The wager has ceased to be an experiment, has proved itself not motiveless but purposeful on the part of God. It has opened the way, God's way, to strong and creative manhood.

"And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends" (xlii, 10). After the struggle to light and humble reconcilement comes intercession, with Job himself, as Eliphaz had blindly promised (cf. xxii, 26–30) and as Elihu had self-confidently offered (cf. xxxiii, 5–7), acting as advocate and daysman. One thinks of another captivity, a literal fact of Hebrew history, a captivity eventually turned to restoration, wherein an unnamed personage who was esteemed "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa. liii, 3, 4; cf. Jer. xxii, 28), yet "bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." It yields an untold wealth of significance to meditate on these two captivities together, with their personal avails, as told in the Second Isaiah and the Book of Job; they belong alike to the supreme disciplines and disclosures of human life.

III. The Five Megilloth

Immediately succeeding the Book of Job in this literary section of the Hebrew canon are five short Scripture books which by Hebrew readers came to be known as "the five Megilloth" (lit. "the five rolls"), for which term we might fitly substitute "the five little classics," such being the popular estimate in which they were held. These, in the most usual Hebrew order, are: The Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. The fact that they are grouped by themselves, with a distinctive name for the collection, gives them a place of their own in the make-up of Biblical literature; their individual meanings also as classics of special value call for their due of consideration.

I

Uses and Estimates of the Group. Some notion of the peculiar distinction accorded to these Megilloth may be gathered from the fact that the reading of them was associated with the observance of the recurring festival seasons in

Jerusalem. Whether this was by public appointment or by a spontaneous social arrangement is not clear; the latter seems more likely. Nor is it immediately plain, except in the case of Lamentations and Esther, what connection was felt between the sentiment of the books and that of the feasts. One thinks most naturally of them as read not for stiff edification, as a didactic exercise, but for recreation, as a sweetener of reunion and genial intercourse. To such use they are well adapted. They may be regarded as their age's vehicle of popular entertainment and instruction, analogous to the drama of Shakespeare's time and the novel of our own. Thus it came about in the finished organization of the Jewish commonwealth, with its social and religious customs, that the Song of Songs was regularly read at the Feast of Passover, Ruth at the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Tabernacles, Esther at the Feast of Purim, and Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab, the fast day observed in commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem.

In Jewish Social Life

Of these five occasions four are festival seasons, only one, the one marked by the central book of the group, being a fast day. The general connotation of them was not legal nor prophetic, not austere at all but care-free and joyous; times when, as it were, the mind and mood of the people could let itself go. Its sense of freedom and well-being is fitly indicated in Nehemiah's advice to the people when on the birthday of Judaism they were minded to take their law weeping: "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength" (Neh. viii, 10; cf. also Esth. ix, 19, 22). Freedom, deliverance, confidence, — such was the unspoken language of these festival occasions, a sentiment that the one memorial of the nation's dispersion did not avail to impair.

It is not without significance that these Megilloth, or little classics, should have come to be associated, as by a natural affinity, with the unprescribed observances of the feasts. They too, in a sense not so true of other Scripture, are literary works in which the free Hebrew mind has let itself go. Written neither in criticism nor in propaganda, they have not the fear of orthodoxy nor the awe of mystic revelation before their eyes. They represent the thoughts and sentiments in which the popular mind can take pleasure or find itself reflected, without reference to the big monitions of priest or prophet. Perhaps that is why three of these books, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, did not attain to a confirmed status in the canon until late and after much hesitation of estimate. They were, in a word, literary works that gave free rein to the sincerest thought and feeling, letting the question of official sanction take care of itself. If the canon was eventually liberal enough to include them, so much the more hospitable and tolerant the canon.

In Literary Appreciation

Nor should we fail to note here the variety and the artistic quality observable in these works. All the leading Hebrew types of literary workmanship — song, idyl, elegy, mashal, plotted story — are in turn represented, each by what may be called a cabinet masterpiece, a specimen of finished literature in its kind. This fact does not look fortuitous. It is as if the Hebrew literature, proudly conscious of itself, were minded to come out from its ancient seclusion and measure itself by the standards of the world.[1] It was in a ripened and highly cultured period that this final section of the Old Testament was made up, a period wherein the most influential literature in the world was its rival. We do well to give this fact its due among the Hebrew men of letters in whose care were the uniquely educated people of a book.

[1] Cf. p. 431, above.

II

Traits of the Individual Books. The choice and finished literary form observable in these Megilloth connotes something quite other than pride of verbal or structural artistry. It is in its finely wrought way a reflection of the soul within. One may apply to it Spenser's words,

> For of the soule the bodie forme doth take;
> For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

True as this is of all well-meant literature, we seem to recognize it more as in form and phrase the piece is more carefully molded. It is dealing with a finer, more penetrative thrust of truth. This, I think, can be said of the works now under consideration. One discerns in each of them not so much a great mass or landmark of Biblical disclosure as a kind of cabinet piece, something clarifying, corrective, some view that makes for the true balance and perspective of things. There is about them a certain intimacy of spiritual relation, a tribute not only to the new and cogent but to the wholesome and familiar. Hence the value accorded to them in the observances of the festival seasons.

Two of the five Megilloth, the Song of Songs and the Book of Ruth, have been in part discussed in the preceding chapters. They must needs come up again, however, in their canonical order, for the sake of their respective contributions to the treasury of Hebrew classics.

Song of Songs: Cantata of the Awakening of Love

1. In "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's" a notable departure is made from the lines of thought and sentiment conventionally deemed Scriptural, — whether to the help or hurt of sacred values has been a much-vexed question. It is the only Scripture book that deals with the human passion of love, the love of the sexes for each other, that pervasive theme without which modern romance could hardly exist,

yet which religious asceticism and sanctimony have viewed askance as if it were a thing to be apologized for. As such it sounds at first reading like a literary interloper. The tone of the book is so richly Oriental and sensuous that both it and the Bible which sponsors it are placed as it were on trial, it for its frank disregard of the ascetic and prudish, the Bible for its warm hospitality to diverse works. Such has always been the book's equivocal fortune, which scholars have tried to adjust by giving it allegorical and esoteric meanings both Jewish and Christian. With these we need not concern ourselves here, at least until we have seen what simpler suggestion lies in the rich imagery and description of the poem. We may find, indeed, that the Bible, with its liberality of inclusion makes room therein for what is at once the most primal and the most sacred relation in life.

NOTE. The Song of Songs as the supposed *chef d'œuvre* of the Solomonic school of lyric poetry, and its relative purity of sentiment as compared with that of other Oriental literature, is spoken of on page 88, above. This early introduction of the poem does not imply an early date of composition or Solomonic authorship; these depend upon quite other considerations.

Its Literary Type and Shaping

The tissue of the book, as the title intimates, is superlatively lyric, the loftiest reach of Hebrew song. It is the lyric mood, with its singleness and intensity of emotional states, that is throughout the controlling element. All along, however, a quasi-dramatic element supervenes, a suggestion of scene and personation, which tempts the reader to search for a coördinated plot but with elusive results. To make a built drama of it, or even something analogous to an Elizabethan masque, calls for too much artifice of interpretation; it does not justify itself against the next expositor. The Hebrew genius, at its freest in the impassioned lyric, was lame and clumsy in the dramatic; the Book of Job has to some extent evinced that. We can, however, call the book before us a lyric cycle.

Somewhat like the libretto of a cantata, it is a series of lyric moods, called forth by conflicting interests or desires, and moving in music to a firm lyric situation, which latter embodies the underlying purpose of the whole. Thus, while not unobservant of dramatic concatenation, its parts remain true to the dictum later laid down by Milton that a living poem should be "simple, sensuous, impassioned." It lets the passion of pure and invincible love sing its own story.

A Fitly Conceived Situation

A main difficulty in forming a consistent concept of this Song of Songs is in getting at a clear situation out of which its elusive opulence of imagery and ardor may be evolved. For such situation the sentiment and atmosphere of King Solomon's court, realized or assumed, was evidently in the mind of the author. Was there something there, recorded or intimated, from which his creative genius could derive the tissue of his lyric story? The Hebrew mind, with its strong sense of realism, did not take kindly to pure fiction; it sought some peg of fact or of old-time tradition on which to hang its poem or story or discourse. Can such a concrete support be discerned under the verbal splendors of this Song of Songs?

I think a very suggestive one can be cited. It is contained in the story of Abishag the Shunammite, who as a choicely selected maiden ministered to King David in his extreme old age (1 Kings i, 1–4), and who after his death was desired, to his undoing, by Adonijah, Solomon's ambitious elder brother (1 Kings ii, 13–25). There is nothing in the story thus far to supply substance for the song cycle, but there is something out of which such a healthy ideal as prevails in the song could naturally evolve it. If we add to the Abishag episode the thought of her earlier plighted love, and the equally probable thought that the amorous young king, after Adonijah's death, may have desired her — as the Oriental custom permitted — for his harem, we have all the factual suggestion needed for the situation of

this cantata, as also a direct channel of ideal toward its crowning portrayal of mated love. That the old-time story was actually in the poet's inventive mind is of course not to be asserted, but to put it there with its imagined sequel does much to give ground and meaning to a situation which the poem itself has left somewhat vague.

NOTE. It will be remembered that the composition of the Song of Songs belongs to the post-exilic period of the scribe and the man of letters, when the older literature was the quarry and gleaning-ground for edifying values suited to newer needs and tastes. A prominent trait of this period has been noted in what is said of the use of *midrash*, or interpretative comment. See page 407 above, footnote, for the existence of such midrash in the Books of Chronicles; see also page 419 for the view of the Book of Jonah as a virtual midrash on 2 Kings xiv, 25–27. If we hesitate to ascribe to the Song of Songs the dignity and solemnity of a midrash, may we not at least — in musical parlance — regard it as a kind of fantasia, or love rhapsody, which, however, modulates in the end to something worthy of a place among the five Megilloth? *Finis coronat opus.*

How this is Borne out in the Poem

It is not easy on any consideration to sift and assign the various elements of the poem, modeled as this doubtless was on the customary wedding-week celebrations, among the solos, antiphons, and choruses of its setting, and through the progressive stages of its sentiment. In this respect the poem ranks as one of the most puzzling books of Scripture. To reduce its wayward emotions to a situation like the one just described, however, seems to me the simplest and most lucid solution available. Consider how on the whole the action — if such it may be called — answers to it. Looking under the scenic and vocal setting we note that two main characters dominate the course of the poem: King Solomon (cf. iii, 6–11; viii, 11, 12), appearing first in the guise and with all the puissance of a royal wooer, and later put off with another award; and a certain north-country maiden (Shulammite = Shunammite, vi, 13), whose solicited love, being already plighted elsewhere,

refuses response to all the king's pleas and praises, and in the end emerges stanchly faithful to her previous affiance. Thus we may say an essential spiritual force was revealed. For Solomon's assumed time and Orientalism was portrayed the victory of the heart over the harem, and for all times and minds the victory of essential love over the self-indulgent charms of the flesh and the world. It is like a translation of love into selfless and spiritual terms. The Shulammite, responding, as mindful of royalty, in all gentleness and lowly homage, yet remains true to the dictates of her own steadfast heart. It is for her not a willfulness but a life. Her final sense of the issue, as expressed to her restored beloved, is

> Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
> As a seal upon thine arm:
> For love is strong as death;
> Jealousy is cruel as Sheol;
> The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
> A very flame of Jehovah.
> Many waters cannot quench love,
> Neither can floods drown it:
> If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
> He would utterly be contemned (viii, 6, 7).

And this is not merely her verdict, it is the constructive idea of the Song of Songs itself, wrought out in a lilt as delicate as that which makes the charm of modern lyric and romance. One might without indignity to sacred values match her melody in the words of Sir Philip Sidney's "Ditty":

> My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
> By just exchange one for another given;
> I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
> There never was a better bargain driven.

Can we call a book so wrought and resolved, though quite oblivious of pious or allegorical involvements, unworthy of a place in holy Scripture? I think not. I think that for its portrayal of Biblical values it may be put as a companion piece to A Worthy Woman and Our Lady Wisdom.

Bear in mind, however, that we are dealing here not with a developed drama but with a strain of song, a lyric cycle designed not to be declaimed but sung. Its scene was not staged but imagined; if read, as the book came to be at the Passover season, it was read in the distinctive consciousness of the song magic of style. And here we may note in what masterly yet delicate way the situation we have conceived is set forth in music. On the one side Solomon's, the would-be bridegroom's, appeal is represented by two choruses: a palace chorus of bridesmaids, "daughters of Jerusalem" (cf. i, 5; iii, 11), singing sometimes the conventional bridal lays, sometimes antiphonally with the Shulammite maiden, and a male chorus of royal retainers coming up from the wilderness, presumably the bride's country home, to the palace where she is retained and where the wedding is to be, singing her charms in the king's name (cf. iii, 7, 8; vi, 12, 13). All the splendid claims of court and harem are urged on this side; one is tempted to quote in parallel Psalm xlv, 10, 11 (called by title, "A Song of Loves"). On the other side is only the Shulammite, with her solo voice, virtually captive, homesick for the free and fruitful country of her birth, lovesick for her absent loved one, singing her yearnings and searchings for him, lapsing into dreamy and crooning mood as of one entranced, and guarding her personality by a reiterated caveat of refrain,

The Scenic and Vocal Setting

> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
> By the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field,
> That ye awaken not, nor stir up love,
> Until it please[1] (ii, 7; iii, 5; viii, 4).

But it is in her song that one finds the real power and purity of love, and it prevails. Compared with the voluptuous hintings sung by the daughters of Jerusalem (i, 2–ii, 8; vi, 4–9),

[1] Translation of the Jewish version, 1917. The translation of viii, 4, follows more correctly the reading of the margin.

and the sensuous laudations from the masculinity of Solomon's mighty men (iv, 1–15; vii, 1–9), her tender solo, so full of the sweet call of the springtide (ii, 8–17) and of dreamy longing for reunion with her beloved in her mother's house (iii, 1–4; v, 2–16; vii, 10–viii, 3), seems to penetrate beneath the heated artificialities of court and harem and give her chaste beauty and fidelity a power "terrible as an army with banners," before which the amorous monarch stands abashed (vi, 4, 5). His words,

> Turn away thine eyes from me,
> For they make me afraid,

read like a confession of defeat. Such love as this no sensuous or worldly allurements can either waken or subdue. It dwells in the holiest place where the purest passions of the inner life have their home. Its expression is beyond the shows of the stage; it is open only to the music and magic of song. And such is the lyric vehicle of this first and finest book of the five Megilloth.

NOTE. It may aid the reader in verifying or otherwise testing the above-given view of the Song of Songs if we note here the stages, or canticles, in which, as I conceive, the cantata progresses. A key sentence is given with each one.

CANTICLE I (Chapters i, 2–iii, 5):

> The king hath brought me into his chambers. . . .
> I am black though comely,
> O ye daughters of Jerusalem, . . .
> Look not upon me.

[Containing the Shulammite's escape in dream from the solicitations of the palace to the freedom of home and beloved.]

CANTICLE II (Chapters iii, 6–v, 9):

> Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness
> Like pillars of smoke? . . .
> Behold, it is the litter of Solomon;
> Threescore mighty men are about it.

[Containing the Shulammite's escape, again in dream, from the loud wooings of the king to the search for her beloved.]

CANTICLE III (Chapters vi, 10–viii, 4):

> Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
> Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
> Terrible as an army with banners?

[Containing the Shulammite's escape from the chariots of Solomon's retinue and the sword dance (vi, 13) in her native country, with the final rebuke to the pertinacious pursuits to which she has been subjected:]

> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
> Why should ye awaken, or stir up love,
> Until it please?[1] (viii, 4).

CANTICLE IV (Chapter viii, 5–16):

> Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,
> Leaning upon her beloved?

[Containing the triumph of love, in various settings of solo, duet, and chorus.]

The frank sensuousness of the Song of Songs, so uncongenial to the ascetic piety of the sanctuary, kept it long from an assured place in the Hebrew canon; but at length the Synod of Jamnia, A.D. 90, gave it final approval, and it became so great a favorite that about A.D. 120 a distinguished rabbi was maintaining of it, "The whole world does not outweigh the day when the Song of Songs was given to Israel; while all the *Writings* are holy, the song is holiest of all."[2] For us this tribute is not merely to the excellence of the book but to a certain inwardness and liberality of the Jewish mind which we do not well to shut out from our appreciation of its Biblical products.

2. From the springtime song of awakened love (cf. Song, ii, 8–14), read and cherished at the Passover season, we pass to the old-time story of Ruth, which was read at Pentecost when, seven weeks after the Passover, the first fruits of the harvest were presented before Jehovah. We have

[1] So, according to the more accurate Jewish translation.
[2] McFadyen, "Introduction to the Old Testament," p. 282.

already considered the probable time and occasion of its composition.[1] It was viewed there as a gentle appeal, in a time of stern puritanism, against the rigors of racial exclusiveness and as a liberal hint toward the freer origin of the Davidic house. Such immediate connotation, however, must needs pass with the mollifying influences of time; but the idyl, with its permanent loveliness and beauty, remained an undying classic. As such it took in time its appropriate and unquestioned place in this third section of the Hebrew canon, among the Megilloth, associated with the common felicities of family and industrial life. With the translation of the Old Testament into Greek, however, and the consequent rearrangement of literary estimates, it was relegated to an earlier period, where, as in our Bible, it comes just after the Book of Judges. Here too it works its gentle influence, as we read the Scripture in historic course, furnishing as it does a sweet sense of the amenities that could and did exist in the crude and anarchic times of the Judges, when as yet "there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (cf. Judg. xxi, 25). It is good for our conception of those rough times and deeds to have this humane and friendly supplement to our sense of "the days when the judges judged" (Ruth i, 1). From a too prevailing record of lawless wrong one turns the leaf to read of a house where extreme poverty is not abject and of a landed estate where wealth is open-handed and kindly, of the tender affection and fidelity of womanhood, and of the noble chivalry of the "next of kin" (Heb. *go'el*) whose right and disposition it is to redeem and protect (cf. Ruth ii, 20; iii, 9–iv, 12 with Lev. xxv, 25–27 and Job's supreme faith, Job xix, 25–27). Thus we may not unfitly call this Book of Ruth the book of native human kindliness, the book wherein are recognized ties of native goodness, ties deeper than land or creed or race.

***Ruth*: Idyl of Family Loyalty and Fidelity**

[1] See above, pp. 417, 418.

3. In the middle of the yearly round of festival seasons came the sad observance of a national fast day, the fast of the Ninth of Ab, in commemoration of the burning of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv, 8, 9 = Jer. lii, 12, 13). On this day was read the Book of Lamentations, a series of five elegies composed in the *ḳinah* measure, and included in these Megilloth as a literary heritage from a time not long after the beginning of the Chaldean exile.

Lamentations: Elegiac Echo of Israel's Subjugation

NOTE. The *ḳinah*, or lament, which was for occasions of grief what the song was for occasions of joy, is defined above (pp. 67, 68), in connection with its first occurrence in Scripture, when David sang his dirge over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i). In the Book of Lamentations the elegy reaches at once its most momentous occasion and its most finished and, as it were, monumental form.

"The Lamentations of Jeremiah" is the title that we read in our English Bible, in both the Authorized and the Revised version. The book has long been held to have been written by the prophet Jeremiah; naturally enough, because the event it memorializes occurred in his day, and because much of his prophecy is in a similar strain. In the Greek version, accordingly, these lamentations have been transferred from their place in the Megilloth to the prophetic section, as a kind of appendix to the Book of Jeremiah. In the original, however, they are not marked either by title (except the first word, *'ēikah*, "How") or by attribution of authorship. They cannot be confidently ascribed to Jeremiah; nor, indeed, as we compare the two productions, have they anything of his vehement and trenchant style. They were read or chanted, too, in quite different mood from that which conditioned his prophecy.

The mood that governs the book, in fact, is not invigorating. To the ordinary reader it is that of one long monotone of sorrow, almost unrelieved by pointed phrase or progress of thought, — a trait so insistent as to provoke

inquiry after its cause. I think we may find this in its monumental character. The five elegies of which it is made up are, in a word, not unlike a huge epitaph, marked as such by the workmanship of the verse. This does not appear — only the level monotony of it appears — in a translation. Four of the five poems (chapters i to iv) are composed acrostic-wise in the alphabetic verse which was deemed the perfection of poetic finish and artistry.[1] They are like cameo work. One cannot but judge, however, that a care so meticulous for verbal form must needs be taken at some expense to the urge and passion of the thought. And, indeed, the work in some measure bears this out. It is all in one minor key; it has little rise and fall of emotion or ideal. The Book of Lamentations is more truly a work of poetic verse-craft moving over a moderate range of feeling than of poetic fire stirring the soul.

A Master Work of Hebrew Verse-Craft

NOTE. The reader will note on looking over the book that each of chapters i, ii, iv, and v consists of just twenty-two verses — the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet — and that chapter iii has sixty-six, just three times that number. In the Hebrew chapters i, ii, and iv maintain the acrostic succession by the first word of each verse or stanza; chapter v, the only one not alphabetic, has the same number of verses in the stricter and briefer mashal couplet. In chapter iii, the most highly wrought of the elegies both in form and sentiment, twenty-two triplets of lines, three successive lines beginning with each letter, make up the sixty-six verses. Thus in this third and central book of the five Megilloth we find the supreme artistic achievement of the *kinah* or elegiac measure. It is a far cry from the strong outburst of David's dirge.

We would not leave the Lamentations, however, with a note of disparagement. The care for finished workmanship was also the instinctive care for permanence, for that consummate style which is the antiseptic of thought. As these plaintive elegies, written by a poet of the homeland while the calamity of downfall and dispersion was yet young, was a heartfelt memorial of the

A Strain of Undying Patriotism.

[1] For alphabetic poetry in the Hebrew literature, see above, p. 446.

most determining event of Hebrew history, so both for inherent worth and for the response accorded them they proved to be, as they still are, a *monumentum aere perennius*. Read from the ages before Christ at the annual fast of the fifth month, they renewed their memorial lament after the final overthrow of the Jewish state A.D. 70, and may still be heard to-day, as crooned or chanted, at the wailing-place by the Temple wall in Jerusalem. Thus, with their pervading note of resignation and devout endurance, they are a monument to the extraordinary tenacity and resiliency of the Jewish character in its devotion to the land and faith of the fathers, its undying patriotism of the heart. It is not seemly to despise or disparage such steadfastness as this, however expressed.

In reading these plaintive elegies one feels the pressure of something very tender, very chastened, very noble. Their note of submission to disaster and dispersion in a spirit so contrite, so acquiescent, so enduring, above all in such fortitude of hope (see especially iii, 19–31) redeems them grandly from the morbidness of woe. It is not the note of weakness but of resolute recourse to the Source of strength. A nation consciously treading the Valley of Humiliation is minded not to make grief a luxury but to discover its meaning and discipline. The concluding petition of the prayer which constitutes the fifth elegy,

> Turn thou us unto thee, O Jehovah, and we shall be turned;
> Renew our days as of old (v, 21),[1]

may stand as the keynote to which the whole book, with its chastened artistry of words, is tuned. And so this central roll of the Megilloth, hallowed by the annual fast of the ninth of Ab, remains to all time as the elegiac echo of Israel's most searching experience, a subjugation which did not subjugate but refined.

[1] Repeated as a colophon at the end of the Jewish version.

4. As we continue to read these Megilloth in their allotted order the impression grows that there was a deeply felt connection in each case between the sentiment of the book and that of the festival season at which it was read. We know this was so with two of them, Lamentations and Esther, for the book and the observance were mutually dependent. Whether it was equally so with the others raises the interesting question what the old-time feasts really meant when after centuries of laxity or discontinuance they became an organic feature of the later law and cultus. With this question, however, our only present concern is as to its literary aspect. And of this not the least interesting inquiry is as to the possible connection of the baffling, estranging Book of Ecclesiastes with the most lucid and care-free observance of the year, the Feast of Tabernacles. The latest prophecy associated this feast with the consummation of Israel's holy destiny (Zech. xiv, 16–21); and here one of the latest-written books of the Old Testament, the book that encountered the greatest difficulty of inclusion in the Hebrew canon, seems in superficial impression to have associated all human wisdom and labor, this crowning season included, with vanity and disillusion. What can a fair valuation of Biblical literature say to this?[1]

Ecclesiastes: Ripened Wisdom of Disillusion

We are working, it will be remembered, in that stratum of Biblical truth which urges no claim, as do law and prophecy, to direct revelation from Jehovah; it presupposes rather the free uprise of the human heart and mind from beneath.[2] We are in a literary period also when things were written and implicitly accepted in the name and imputed influence of great personages of history. We have seen how true this was in Psalms and Proverbs; how David and Solomon lived

The Book's Imputed Source and Type

[1] Question answered in third paragraph below.

[2] See above, pp. 428, 429.

again in the songs and maxims that somehow emanated from their gifts of mind and heart. David's piety became thus the dominant spiritual force of this third section of the canon; but for the secular affairs of life Solomon's brilliancy and versatility were a close second. He has already figured in these Megilloth, in connection with the Song of Songs; ages later, too, his name is potent to designate "The Wisdom of Solomon," an Apocryphal book, written about 100 B.C., and "Psalms of Solomon," written close on the confines of the Christian era.[1]

It is by an assumed name that the Book of Ecclesiastes is attributed to Solomon, — a virtual intimation that the book is his only symbolically. Its title is "Words of Ḳoheleth, Son of David, King in Jerusalem," the Hebrew name Ḳoheleth being represented in our versions by its Greek equivalent "Ecclesiastes" and translated "Preacher." There is nothing in the book in the least ecclesiastical or clerical — more nearly the opposite, rather; nor, indeed, does the writer assume the rôle either of Solomon or of a king except for two chapters (i, ii) merely in order to draw proper significance from two traditional qualities of Solomon, his wisdom and his riches (cf. 1 Kings iii, 11–13; iv, 29–34; x, 23–27). His real function is that of a sage, a counselor or teacher of the people (cf. xii, 9, 10), who as his life's business "composed and compiled and arranged many lessons"[2] (mashals). This puts his work in the class of Wisdom books, a distinction which it shares with the books of Proverbs and Job, — the three making up a characteristic and homogeneous body of didactic literature among the Scripture books. It is as a body of sage and ripened counsel — of a wisdom which in all its worldly adventures stayed by its

[1] See above, p. 85, note.

[2] I quote here my own translation, taking occasion thereby to call attention to a book of mine, "Words of Ḳoheleth" (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston).

royal practitioner (ii, 9) and proved its diametric contrast to folly (ii, 13); which with all its seeming scorn of consistency yet obtained and maintained a footing in that most hospitable of books the Bible — that we are called upon to estimate this Book of Ecclesiastes. It matches Job's boldness — not to say audacity — before God (cf., for instance, Job ix, x, xiii, 13–19) with an equal audacity toward the ongoings of the world, pronouncing its verdicts unsparingly yet with a sad sincerity. "And further, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge" (xii, 9). His words, cherished as a roll of the Megilloth, became the favorite literary entertainment of the favorite festal season of the year.

Key to its Attitude and Spirit

Recurring to this curious fact, we may take, I think, this Feast of Tabernacles, as it came to be observed in the matured Judaism, as furnishing in a way the key to its attitude and spirit. Read at the close of the harvest season, when, as it were, the year's account of stock was taken with its gains and its ills, the book also is a clear-eyed, unsparing account of the stock of human life "under the sun," — its profits and its deficits, or at lowest avails its salvages, as measured not by prophetic vision or religious emotion but by matter-of-fact reckoning and common sense. Its keynote, as I hear it, is not its abrupt exclamation of the wholesale vanity of things. That is only its postulated and presupposed setting, expressed at first, it is true, with the one-sided intensity of Oriental style. The real keynote and ruling idea is sounded in the question that immediately follows, "What profit hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun?" — a question asked, as one can see from its calmer repetition (iii, 9), not so much for frantic denial as for honest and sober answer. The ground term of the book, reverberating in every inquiry, is the word "profit" (Heb. *yithrōn*, "surplusage," "residuum"); and while the author concedes vanity in every phase

and pursuit of life, he does this rather as a point of departure than as a point of approach. Frankly owning all that pessimism or materialism may urge, his virtual inquiry is, "What of it?" In other words, his concern is rather for positive avails of life, however great or small these may be, than for leaving life, after all is summed up, in a hopeless welter of negation. It is simple wisdom to take account of the under side; it is candid wisdom, if the balance sheet shows only meager surplusage or salvage, to own the fact and order life accordingly. Such, as I deem it, and not a too hastily imputed pessimism, is the constructive aim and spirit of this Book of Ecclesiastes.

This, while it seems to reduce human life, common and privileged alike, as by a vigorous method of residues, to plainest and as it were business terms, yet really makes room in the Biblical inclosure for the modern spirit that seems to many so unbiblical, the spirit of science and intrepid progress of thought, the resolute disposition to "see life steadily and see it whole." In this respect it is the most modern book in the Bible, the favorite of what timid religionists are pleased to call skeptical and froward minds. It faces facts, the ugly along with the pleasant. It dispels, not without sadness, the illusions that the too fond or too discordant propensities of human nature engender. It is not afraid to be agnostic about some things, to call life from its point of view a baffling thing. Here, of course, we must needs reckon with its prevailing point of view. We have had the prophetic, the legalistic, the devotional, — prophet, priest, and king have contributed their quotas to Biblical truth. This is the matured Wisdom point of view, from which must be reckoned both avails and limitations. Through this book, we may say, is admitted into the tolerant repository of Scripture the most practical, most nearly adequate message that the Wisdom insight, as such, could vouchsafe to man in his dim encounter with toil and time and chance.

Its Survey and Summation of the Problem of Life

As regards what may be called its structure, the Book of Ecclesiastes bears the marks of being in part the original composition of the author, in part a compilation of mashals from various sources loosely arranged to support his main thesis, — thus answering to the author's description of his literary method, xii, 9–11. Written for the most part in a rather incisive prose, it rises at times, and especially toward the end (cf. x, 16, onward), into a somewhat free imitation of the Solomonic mashal, culminating in the familiar poem, xi, 7 to xii, 8, which may fitly be entitled "Rejoice and Remember."[1] Many sayings interspersed through the book, as they are unusually epigrammatic and adage-like (cf., for instance, the proverbs about fools, ii, 14; iv, 5; vii, 5–7; x, 1), suggest that the author, like Solomon before him, drew for illustrative material on current maxims, as contributing their share to an all-round survey of life.

Beginning with a short proem, or introduction (i, 2–11), in which he states his negative in most absolute terms, the sage Ecclesiastes, in his quest for residuum (*yithrōn*), assumes the mind of King Solomon, the traditional type of wisdom and wealth, long enough (i, 12–ii, 26) to get the monarch's supposed verdict on the yields of life at its best; after which, no longer in kingly rôle, he goes on in amplification to survey the depths and shoals of human labor and experience under the sun. Two things seem to have proved too much for the sage-king's power to solve: the emptiness of all that wealth and wisdom can give, and the stark equality of wise and fool alike in death (cf. ii, 12–17); so from his royal height he is forced to the conclusion that "there is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and make his soul enjoy good in his labor" (ii, 24). But this is already a residuum, a thing worth while — or, as he says, "from the hand of God"; and as the sage goes on

[1] As in my "Words of Ḳoheleth," p. 345.

following out in detail the same two enigmas that perplexed the king, it reappears in enhanced cheer and climax, as a foil to the successive bafflements brought to view (see iii, 12, 13; v, 18–20; ix, 7–10); and at the "end of the matter," when "all hath been heard," the various counsels of heartenment are condensed into the sound and tried principle of earthly Wisdom, "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole man" (xii, 13).[1] Thus this Book of Ecclesiastes, for all its sad sense of vanity and disillusion, is on the whole constructive. If not optimistic — its plane and era before life and immortality came to light would not let it be that — it is at least melioristic. It has sought the more livable alternative in a hard and crooked world, and found it.

Yet along with this body of wise counsel there still remains a clinging sense of unfinality, of limitation. The sage breaks off some of his most penetrative findings to exclaim, "All this have I tried by wisdom; I said, 'Oh, let me be wise!' — and it was far from me. Far off, that which is; and deep, deep — who shall find it?" (vii, 23, 24).[2] He has been pursuing different lines of thought from those laid out by prophets and priests. Prophetic vision has long subsided (cf. Psa. lxxiv, 9). The name of Jehovah, the God Who Is,[3] always in the mouth of priests, does not occur in his book. To be uncertain about Him who Is, is to be baffled by the involvements of That which is. One notes the same uncertainty in the plebeian words of Agur (cf. Prov. xxx, 2–4). Our book is in fact the utterance of a distinctively human wisdom, human insight, in that stratum of Hebrew thought which ignores transcendental knowledge or disclosure.[4] Its ripened utterance, sad and sincere, is

[1] Cf. above, p. 450.

[2] I quote here my own rendering, see my "Words of Ḳoheleth," p. 300.

[3] Cf. above, pp. 47–50.

[4] The passage just quoted is a virtual denial of thushiyah.

indeed the Wisdom of disillusion, and as such the chill of unfinality and limitation is upon it. It marks a point where Scripture must pause for new light and power.

I have spoken of the Book of Ecclesiastes as in the class with Proverbs and Job.[1] Its thought structure has in effect so intimate a relation to that of the other books that we may regard the three as making up together, whether so intended or not, a kind of trilogy, in which Hebrew Wisdom is set forth in ordered and progressive utterance, making thus a distinctive strain of Scripture truth, a strain wrought out to a clear and candid sense of its values, its trend, its limits. And this is done not by reducing Wisdom to a philosophy but by putting its ideals and theories to successive tests of personal experience.

As Correlate with Proverbs and Job

Let us note in brief outline how this is.

It all centers round the idea of success or failure. The Book of Proverbs — miscellaneous maxims of conduct brought together by sages and impressed by the allegorical Lady Wisdom — resolves itself into a practical manual of success. In other words, its precepts one and all make for one comprehensive end, reward, — by which we mean the gains, the wages, the profits of wise and reverent living, as expressed in terms of wealth, welfare, honor, health, family, long life, a peaceful death. To this end it summons the sagacity, the prudence, the piety, the teachableness, not excluding the cleverness and watchful shrewdness, of the well-endowed man; in fact it is a call to the efficient management of life on high but essentially self-regarding principles. With all this the Book of Proverbs sets itself to deal, and its promise of reward, as also its threat of failure, is firm and absolute.

At this point of the trilogy the author of the Book of Job takes up the theme. He does not dispute results or conditions; these are sound and sure; rather he institutes

[1] Cf. above, p. 498.

a deeper inquiry. It is as if he had said to his heart, The reward is all right, what of the man? what has personal experience to say? In answer he brings from the familiar traditions of the past a man perfect and upright, who has earned and in fullest measure enjoyed the material rewards of earthly life and then in one swift, unmotived catastrophe lost them. There was nothing left him to show for a well-spent and godly life. The Book of Job, as its contribution to the growing trilogy, tells the sequel. Job's steadfast consistency, in integrity and heart-loyalty, proved that the hope of reward is not the determining motive of sterling manhood. There is a fealty to God and truth which is independent of work and wage or of godliness and gain.[1]

As Wisdom lore becomes still more seasoned and discriminating the sage Ecclesiastes at length takes up the theme by a new grounding of the test question. No disparagement to Wisdom; it is still the polar opposite to folly; but it is as if he had asked his heart, What is that thing reward, after all? what the profit? To get at the answer he, like his predecessor, draws on the personal experience of the past. He assumes the mind of the most admired personage of Hebrew history, King Solomon, who with his superb gifts of wealth and wisdom has all the rewards that heart could wish and all the ability to appraise them. If he cannot tell what life is worth, in pay and profit, no one can. And his verdict on it all is "Vanity of vanities." Ecclesiastes carries on his inquiries, descending from the kingly station to the laborer's, the common man's. And everywhere he finds the same flat level of prospect, the same famine of surplusage. "All the labor of man is for his mouth, yet also is the soul not filled" (vi, 7), such is one of his sad confessions. That thing reward is not of the life, but extrinsic, exotic, a thing outside. Life itself is an ultimate fact. It has no equivalent; it will accept no substitute.

[1] Cf. summary, "Epic of the Inner Life," p. 20.

It must be its own reward and blessedness, or nothing.[1] Nothing for it then but to fall back upon the life itself, with its goods and ills, making it fair and faithful in the fear of God.

Thus in his correlation with the other books, which correlation from this view seems like a thing designed, the sage Ecclesiastes rounds out the symmetrical body of Wisdom literature, ending it essentially where it began. But not *as* it began. A great sense of values and safeguards and limits has supervened. Much has been gained to its unbiased surveys of life; nothing lost. And if it must come out on a great negative, it is something, it is much, to have emerged to a great sense of need. The modern poet's words,

> 'T is life, whereof our nerves are scant,
> Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want,

seem fitly to embody the spiritual surge and urge of our sage's quest. And if in his dim day it seems far and futile, yet unsurmised by him a day is soon to come when a Greater than earthly sage will say, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (*perisson*, "in overflow," John x, 10). The real reward, the true *yithrōn*, will not fail.

5. With the Book of Esther, the fifth of the Megilloth or little classics, is associated the Feast of Purim, or Lots, not so much a religious observance as an annual merrymaking (cf. Esth. ix, 19, 22), instituted especially by and for the Jews of the dispersion (cf. iv, 3) in commemoration of the deliverance narrated in the book. To call the book a romance is not to imply that it is unhistorical. A critical episode of the Persian period may well have underlain the story and its memorial; though in some ways the situation, of which this is the only record, is hard to reconcile with what is known

***Esther:* Romance of the Lot that Failed**

[1] Cf. my "Words of Koheleth," p. 212.

of Persian history; some incidents, too, are hard to fit with the ways of an Oriental court. It was, however, as essentially a romance, a story masterfully told and colored, that the Book of Esther had access and power among the Jewish people. As such it is a notable and characteristic product of the later Hebrew literature.

NOTE. We have already, in connection with the Book of Daniel, touched upon the vogue of the historical tale and of historical fiction in general; see above, pp. 280, 281. It seems to have belonged to the like species as the *midrash* (cf. above, pp. 407 note, 419); was perhaps a more flexible and less didactic development of it.

Its Atmosphere and Animus

One of the first noteworthy things that the attentive reader of Esther feels is its atmosphere, "that emotional and social fluid which holds the separate social atoms in solution," and which in this case is peculiar. The feeling rises as soon as he has passed the introductory stage (i, ii), which has prepared for the action, and read of the promotion of "Haman the son of Hammadatha the Agagite" to the post of prime minister of the realm (iii, 1). From this point onward, by means of a double narrative plot — two stories merged eventually into one — our story resolves itself into the account of a bitter feud between Haman and Mordecai, breaking into scheme and counter scheme as soon as Haman discovered that Mordecai was a Jew (iii, 4). The word "Agagite" (= Amalekite) explains the case. The two men were representative of two races, Amalek and Israel, which from remote times had been deadly foes. It was Amalek who as the first opponent fought Israel in Rephidim (Exod. xvii, 8–16), against whom Moses made a special decree of extermination (Deut. xxv, 17–19), and whose king Agag, Haman's lineal ancestor, was hewn in pieces by Samuel (1 Sam. xv, 32, 33). A racial antipathy, like a malign instinct, had always existed between the two nations, and Haman seized the opportunity of power on his part to glut it. The feeling of this on the part of

the Hebrews is what gives rise to the unusual atmosphere that pervades our story,[1] making it in some ways so unbiblical, — an atmosphere not religious nor tolerant, hardly even moral, but purely racial. The Book of Esther is a story of racial crisis and fortune, narrated in the spirit not of psalmist and prophet but of sheer race reaction, as if the long dispersion had caused a reversion to this. One feels here also the pride, the solidarity, the exclusiveness of this unique Jewish race; and these qualities, though admirable, engender an unlovely animus and attitude which even the splendid heroism and self-abnegation of Esther rather accentuates than softens. In fine, the Book of Esther, for all its noble features, has to be read with a certain spiritual reservation and allowance.

Its Rationale of Tone and Form

The consideration of atmosphere, however, gets us only a little way toward the heart of the book; it was not this that most deeply caused the rejoicing of the Feast of Purim, the memorial of the lot that failed. It was evidently in this lot and its sequel that the Jews found their hope and cheer. Haman, pondering his plot of exterminating the Jews, had the lot cast before him twelve times, month by month, before he dared undertake a thing so atrocious (iii, 7; ix, 24–26). It was the appeal of heathen superstition to the occult powers of Fortune and Destiny (cf. Isa. lxv, 11); and one may imagine that the twelve lucky casts, one so uniformly after the other, had on his gambling mind a good deal the effect of miracle — or perhaps of having got the combination that would break the bank. It was as if his superstitious appeal to chance had somehow got behind chance to some mystic decree. He had obtained the warrant for a spiteful and inhuman act. So he bore his weight upon his lot, and appointed the date of execution (iii, 13).

[1] A pervading atmosphere has already been noted in connection with the dominance of legalism; see above, p. 387.

Here then comes in the story of the lot that failed and its effect on the Jewish mind. Events came out the other way, and so marvelously that to the Jews in their turn the reversal must have been equivalent to miracle. It was just the kind of happening that thinking people are wont, when they can look back upon it, to ascribe to divine purpose and agency. Nor was such ascription foreign to their habits of thought. Many events of less moment throughout Jewish history had been deemed miraculous; the lot had often been appealed to and trusted in; a distinctive trait of the national mind was implicit belief in and looking for the immediate interposition of God in human affairs. "Jews ask for signs" (1 Cor. i, 22) was St. Paul's characterization of his people. In this deliverance, however, was something that gambling could not determine. It was beyond the sphere of luck or unmotived chance, — a new proof, even for a scattered and subject people, that "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (cf. Isa. liv, 17). As such the wonderful reversal of outcome was as impressive, it meant as much, as miracle.

But how shall this be told, — with what presupposition, what coloring? We meet here a question not merely of the Jews' religious faith but of fitting literary tone and form. To relate the story in terms of the Hebrew recognition of miracle would be virtually to match one occult mystery with another, as if a plot supported by capricious omens were to be met and foiled by an equally capricious *deus ex machina*. Such was not the way of the school in which the Jews had been reared. They had learned — it was in their blood and race — to identify Jehovah's work not by gambling but by the insight of reason and motive. He had always brought His dealings with men and their reasons out into the open, where they could be so mingled with fact and with the straight human mind that His presence therein could be taken for granted. This, I think, explains the purely secular idiom of

the Book of Esther, which is thought by some to lower its tone among Scripture writings. It is in fact the idiom of truest answer to the superstition of lot and luck. Accordingly, the writer has chosen to narrate his story in terms of plain event and circumstance, ignoring, perhaps purposely avoiding, religious or occult values, thereby making the failure of the lot stand out more palpable. The moving details of romance too, the remarkable circumstantiality with which he has interwoven cause and consequence, hap and coincidence, — quite as in modern story-craft, — are rather a virtue than a redundance; they show not only on what apparent accidents events may turn but how truly these belong with the rest in an interdependent chain. It is a reduction from the fortuitous to the normal.

Its Right to Bible Grade

The Book of Esther, with its story of the beautiful queen who by her heroism made common cause with her imperiled people and by her cleverness saved them, became extremely popular in Jewish social life; its stimulus to Purim shows that. Among the five Megilloth, indeed, it came in time to be reckoned as *the* Roll *par excellence*. Among the more scrupulous and devout, however, there was much debate, and long, concerning its right to place and rank in a sacred canon. What we have noted of its tone and form will explain why. Its tone was not at all sacred. Its Purim memorial — a social merrymaking — did not promote piety, was not Mosaic. The fact was noted also and grieved over that in all the book the name of the Deity did not once occur, nor any sign of worship. Plainly its whole tissue was of the world, not of the Bible.

A sentence from the heart of the crisis, however, puts a different coloring upon the matter. When Mordecai is imploring Esther to take up her race's cause, his plea is, "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who

knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (iv, 14). What "other place" could he have meant? Here, as it would seem, was a real though reticent recognition — the Jews became reticent in their dispersion — of that "high and holy place" (cf. Isa. lvii, 15) toward which the Hebrew heart and hope always turned, that unseen realm where dwelt the Power and Purpose of eternity. In other words, it was an expression of trust in what we with like reticence and indirectness call Providence; and it is followed by a heroic committal to it as a forestalling agency. This strikes the true Scripture note. Esther's resolve, "and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish" (iv, 15), is a faith, not a gamble, a venture made sacred by fasting, not by superstition; and it prevails. And this it does not by occult means but by the steady and traceable ongoings of event and circumstance. The whole book, in this light, resolves itself into an account of the victory of Providence over luck, — the faith that succeeded over the lot that failed. To this end its interwoven wealth of detail, in the profane world's intelligible dialect, is not its blemish but its supreme fitness. For it shows how all the elements of life, designed and casual, effect and coincidence, coming as it were out of the natural order of things, shaped themselves into relief and deliverance. To have set this forth, though no divine name or trait be applied to it, is to have earned a merited rank in Scripture standards and values. To deny this is to put one's personal judgment above that of the Bible.

IV. On the Literary Frontier

With the last of the five Megilloth the "Treasury of the Choice Hebrew Classics," as such, may be deemed virtually complete. Several books are still comprised in this third division of the canon, one of them at least of great literary

import. These seem, however, to have been added as later-coming works belonging essentially to another class. They have already been considered at length with reference to their subject matter; it remains to glance at them again with reference to their reception and significance when written. They may be viewed as standing on the literary frontier of the Old Testament, rounding out the canon of sacred writings which "the people of a book" had for generations been compiling from their ancient literary heritage.

I

The Visioned and the Settled. Contemplating these added books in their supplemental character as closing the canon, one may regard them as dealing respectively with the Jewish hope and the Jewish record. It is as if the collectors were minded to place here at the end, in a kind of résumé, the permanent Jewish idea, as related to future and past; an idea in which "the habitual expectancy of the Jewish people" and the historical grounds on which that expectancy was based should not fail of adequate expression. This is indicated in the one direction by the Book of Daniel, in which the undying hope of Judaism is set forth in vision, and in the other by what we have called the later cultus literature, the books of Ezra-Nehemiah (originally regarded as one book) and the Chronicles, a history readjusted to the reorganized Jewish state.

To the study that we have already devoted to these let us note in addition what values come from the fact that they function so late in the Hebrew canon.

The date at which by the most probable indications the Book of Daniel[1] seems to have been written, namely, about 168 B.C., falls in the midst of the gravest crisis that the Jewish cause ever underwent. The story of this, and of the

[1] For the study of Daniel in the historical light, as "Mage and Revealer at Court," see above, pp. 278–300.

victorious weathering of it under Judas Maccabæus and his brothers, is told in the apocryphal books of the Maccabees.

Daniel's Apocalyptic Foregleams and Reckonings

It was the crisis that under the fanatical king Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, befell not the Jewish state only but the Jewish religion and cultus. Its significance was more than political or religious. It was in fact the first sharp onset of a conflict bound to come and continue between what modern thought calls Hebraism and Hellenism, the Jewish mind and the Greek mind facing the demands of the inner life. As such its outcome could be portrayed only apocalyptically.

NOTE. It is not in our scope, as it is not in the scope of the canon, to dwell on the details of this Maccabæan crisis. It was in brief the attempt to impose a foreign culture on a nation that by the laxity and venality of its leading classes and their heedless apes seemed superficially ripe for it. A table of its events, from the accession of Antiochus in 176 B. C. to his death in 165, with Scriptural and historical references, is given in Driver, "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 491 (Revised ed.). The darkest period, to which Daniel's allusions seem most closely related, may here be described in the words of Professor Cornill.[1]

"And now (namely, after "the whole city was plundered, its walls razed, and a Syrian garrison put into the city") Antiochus considered the occasion ripe for a master stroke. On the 27th of October, 168 B. C., he issued the insane decree which was intended to exterminate Judaism root and branch. All the sacred writings of the Jews were to be delivered up and destroyed, the exercise of the Jewish religion was forbidden on pain of death, all the Jews were to sacrifice to the Greek gods, and the temple at Jerusalem was to become a sanctuary of Olympian Zeus. The abomination of desolation [2] was actually established in the sacred place, and on the 25th of December, 168 B. C., the first sacrifice was offered there to Zeus — whether by the high priest Menelaus we do not know. The commands of the king were executed with unexampled severity, and the subordinate functionaries of authority evidently took fiendish delight in harassing and tormenting in every imaginable way the Jews who were loyal to the law."

[1] Cornill, "History of the People of Israel," pp. 191, 192.
[2] Cf. Dan. ix, 27; xi, 31; xii, 11; Matt. xxiv, 15.

In our previous study of Daniel[1] we have noted how his four visions, beginning with the dream-vision of chapter vii, becoming increasingly specific and literal as they succeed one another, and accompanied with various reckonings of times, all concentrate themselves on a time marked by the ruthless reign of "a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences" (cf. viii, 23), and by "the transgression" (viii, 13) or "abomination that maketh desolate" (xi, 31). This is in fact the nodal point of the Book of Daniel. How enheartening the designation of it in such transcendent terms must have been to the sorely tried faithful among the Jews needs no affirmation. To know that this very crisis, predicted and calculated by a renowned mage of the old time, would also pass, as it were a mere episode in their larger destiny, was equivalent to a spiritual revival and deliverance. The pious conditions of the story, too, had their effect. In the Maccabean history, written some sixty-five years later, the priest Mattathias, who had started the Maccabæan revolt, is represented as saying in his death-bed address to his sons, "Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, believed, and were saved out of the flame; Daniel for his innocency was delivered from the mouth of lions" (1 Macc. ii, 59, 60). No book of Scripture ever had a more immediate appeal to its time.

How the Book Fits the Time

But Daniel is emphatically a book not for a time but for all time — for eternity. From the beginning of its visions and presages it overflows its Maccabæan episode, — treating this, indeed, only as an obstacle to be overcome in the majestic march of disclosure toward a larger objective. Its revelations, first broached through Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream (chap. ii), are given in terms of kingdoms and their types, culminating in the vision of one "like unto a son of man," who, standing before the Ancient of Days, receives an everlasting dominion which

The Larger Objective

[1] See "The Enigma of the Later Revelations," pp. 297–300, above.

shall not pass away (see vii, 9–14, 27). Such is the final victory, when the judgment is set (vii, 26), and the king who has spoken "words against the Most High" loses his malign power. "Here," says the author, "is the end of the matter" (vii, 28), — as if all else were subsidiary. The more specific disclosure, indeed, of "what shall be in the latter time of the indignation" (cf. viii, 19), "belongeth to the appointed time of the end," and can be reckoned in times; but this is final and supreme.

We call this kind of theme apocalyptic,[1] and many students take its novelty as if the author of Daniel had introduced it. It is not new. The author has merely put into vivid description and imagery subjects that from the beginning of literary prophecy have risen like the promise of dawn from beyond their horizon. It is the kind of theme that deals with such matters as the judgment of the world, the coming kingdom of heaven, the life hereafter, the times of the end, — matters which, ignoring the intermediate chain of cause and circumstance, or political vicissitude, reveal a foreshortened event, opening thereto a boundless field of intuition and realistic imagination. The prophets before Daniel, busy with environing conditions, could not let themselves go in apocalyptic; but many apocalyptic elements, more or less succinct or fleeting, occur in their writings. It remained for the author of Daniel, speaking as if from the time of its early outlook, to give it the charm of vision and symbol and story and concentrate it upon its personal consummator, at the same time publishing it at the point in Jewish history where it would do the most immediate good. For what is more than this his prophecy too, as soon as he has predicted the end of Antiochus (xi, 45), is foreshortened, and goes out in a variegated picture of resurrection (xii, 2), of the glory of good teaching (3), of increased knowledge (4), and of a mingled goodness and wickedness (10) not

[1] For a definition of "apocalyptic," see above, p. 147, note 2.

unlike the condition depicted in Isa. xxxii, 1–8. To Daniel himself "the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end" (vss. 4, 9), and he puts no period to the "thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (vs. 12); but when the seal is broken "they that are wise shall understand" (vs. 10), and over it all shines afar the surviving and victorious kingdom which it is the central purpose of the book to reveal, — the kingdom that "shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (vii, 27).

NOTE. Professor R. H. Charles, in the Encyclopædia Britannica, gives the following list of passages in the canonical Old Testament apocalyptic: Isa. xxiv-xxvii; xxxiii; xxxiv–xxxv (Jer. xxxiii, 14-26?); Ezek. ii, 8; xxxvii–xxxix; Joel iii, 9–17; Zech. xii–xiv; Daniel. To these he ought certainly to have added much of the Second Isaiah, and especially its culminating prophecy of new heavens and a new earth, chapters lxv, lxvi.

The Literary Vehicle and Stimulus

We have seen how remarkably the Book of Daniel fitted itself to the desperate crisis of its Maccabean age. Not less remarkable is the way in which it met and controlled its age's literary tendencies and tastes. Its story form of invention was already a favorite vogue; we have seen this in Esther and Ruth and Jonah.[1] In its age also the custom was rising, and soon to become very prevalent, of writing books in the name or personality of great ones of history; we have seen this in Ecclesiastes and his personation of Solomon, and many uncanonical works of the succeeding time carry it on. Most notable of all, however, is the stimulating effect of its apocalyptic theme, — fresh and awakening as this proved to be. It is not too much to say the Book of Daniel set the imagination of devout Judaism aflame. For the moral austerity of the classical prophets it substitutes the words and imagery of an old-time mage (Daniel never poses as a prophet), speaking in the visioned lore of Chaldean speculation. Thus it opened

[1] Cf. what is said of Daniel, pp. 280, 281, above.

a new and fascinating field already to a degree warranted in Scripture but never before exploited. From this time onward, until about A. D. 100, apocalyptic speculation was very popular, its most prominent work, the Book of Enoch, appearing less than a century after Daniel. It was largely from the ideas exploited in these extra-canonical books — ideas of last judgment, the kingdom of heaven, the Son of man, resurrection, heaven and hell, the end of the age — that the terms and conceptions were derived to which our Lord adjusted his teaching and ministry. He found in these, as in the older Scriptures, much both to adopt and to correct.[1] Only the Book of Daniel, however, in this apocalyptic strain, attained to an assured place in the Hebrew canon.

The Chronicler's Résumé of Judaism

As the Book of Daniel by its bold use of mystic vision revived and exalted the Jewish hope, so more than a century before (cir. 300 B.C.) the Chronicler, by his résumé of the nation's history in the clerical mood, had brought the record of the Judean dynasty and the Temple cultus continuously onward to the reorganization on priestly and Pentateuchal principles under Ezra and Nehemiah; at which point, as the record ends here, we have before us for Biblical values a stationary and static Judaism, in which "Jerusalem had ceased to be the head of an independent state and had become merely a municipality governed by a church."[2] We have already reviewed this work of the Chronicler, in the section on "The Later Cultus Literature."[3] I call him "The Chronicler," in the singular number, because the three works (or rather two) of which the series is made up seem to have come originally from the pen of one author or editor[4] and to have been composed with reference to each other. These two, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles, are the latest history given in the Hebrew canon.

[1] See below, p. 528.
[2] Cf. above, p. 408.
[3] See above, pp. 403–414.
[4] Cf. above, pp. 404, 405.

In the arrangement of this division of the canon, Ezra-Nehemiah, though its story reaches to a later date, is put before Chronicles. Its object is to carry the history on from Cyrus's edict of return to the establishment of law and cultus under Ezra and Nehemiah, as marked by the reception of the Pentateuch and the Levitical organization of the priestly service. From this point the Jewish history, its Biblical values all in, may be taken for granted.

In the Nature of Appendix

As placed after Ezra-Nehemiah, and thus at the very end of the whole canon, the Book of Chronicles (1 and 2 Chronicles originally a single book) reads like a kind of appendix or supplement to the whole course of Scripture annals, designed to make it homogeneous with the matured Judaism of the end. Its title implies this, and as translated into Greek asserts it. It begins with Adam (1 Chron. i, 1); but except for names and genealogies in which the priestly line has a generous share, it has no occasion to enlarge upon events until the Davidic house and the southern kingdom enter, after which the detailed résumé, though traversing the ground already covered by Samuel and Kings, is shaped and colored to the Judaic and Levitical model until the surviving commonwealth, with the Pentateuch as constitution and the Temple as capitol, has passed from monarchy to high-priesthood. "The law was given through Moses" (John i, 17), and the completed organization under that law is portrayed at the literary frontier of the Hebrew Bible. By this the older dispensation is ready to be estimated through the ages.

II

The Pause between the Testaments. To the Jews, thus fortified in their ancient covenant, this doubtless meant a finality; though their most liberal and far-seeing prophets had not read their destiny so (cf., for instance, Jer. xxxi, 31–34; Isa. xlix, 5–7), nor would the opening of apocalyptic

vision and reckoning have it so. Not a finality closed to further additions, it was rather a pause until time and conditions should be ripe for enlargement and fulfillment in more universal relations. Meanwhile let us note what shape the Old Testament canon assumes, with what modifications, as thus it rounds out its third division and pauses at its literary frontier.

The Provincial Facing the Universal

In its later years the Hebrew culture had two centers of activity and influence, one at Jerusalem, where were its scribes and rabbis and religious zealots, the other at Alexandria, which we may call the capital of the Dispersion, where were its scholars and thinkers, and where numerous communities of outland Jews must subsist under foreign conditions. Among these latter circles not only must the Hebrew literature maintain its rivalry with the most cultivated literature of the world,[1] it must be put into the language medium which its own devotees could use. That language medium, now becoming universal for world intercourse, was the Greek. Accordingly, almost coetaneously with the final shaping of the Hebrew book came the earliest version of it, the Septuagint translation, done by Alexandrian scholars. The event was momentous. One may call it the first stroke against Hebrew exclusiveness, the first step beyond the pause. It was like the provincial called to face the universal; an outlying parochial literature to exhibit itself before more finely developed tastes and standards of culture. It could not well escape some tendency to pliability and modification. Rigidly Jewish as it remained in substance, it must in form become readable also to the Greek literary sense.

We have called the Jewish people, educated by the treading in of their venerable literature, the people of a book. This Old Testament in its three coördinate divisions of Law, Prophets, and Writings, is their book, as it were a

[1] Cf. above, p. 431.

library molded to the unity of a dominant idea. These divisions followed one another in successive periods of time as their values came to clearness and standard, the last not being finally settled until near A.D. 100. It is not in our scope here to trace modifying elements through the Septuagint and its dependent versions except in one particular, an important one indeed; namely, the arrangement. The change is especially noticeable in the third division. It consists in putting seven books of that division, by a juster literary valuation, where they intrinsically belong. We have already noted (see p. 431) the transfers that were made. The result was to put narrative works (Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles) where they could be read with other works of their class in consecution and context, and to put works of prophetic strain (Lamentations, Daniel) where their subject matter is vital. This leaves of the third division only the five poetical books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs), the mere withdrawal of the others sufficing to give them a class by themselves. How this facilitates reading the Scripture as a classified series of coördinated works is obvious enough. It makes the successive stages more homogeneous in literary theme and tone. But this is not all. The Hebrew divisions themselves are quite disregarded in favor of a more consecutive sense of the underlying idea. With the prophets put not second but last, and with the poetry central in the volume, one who now reads the Old Testament in course has before him, first, the storied and creative past, to whose annals the law however given or obeyed is merely an adjunct; second and central, the present living values of poetry in lyric and lesson; and finally in the body of the most unique and penetrative contribution of the Hebrew mind to the world's thought, the prophetic sense and power of the eternal future. Here is the true place to pause, as it were in position for the next movement. From this frontier the look is forward.

Effects of the Greek Variation

NOTE. The apocalyptic visions of Daniel, at whatever time published, are ostensibly reckoned from the time of the captivity, and being by so much remote from the pausing point between the Testaments are correspondingly vague and mystical. Much less vague and undefined, though equally apocalyptic, are the prophecies noted under "The Subsidence of Prophecy," pages 352–359, namely, Zech. ix-xiv and Malachi. So much the more fitting is it, therefore, that the Greek variation has so rearranged the Old Testament canon that these, as completing the prophetic section, come last. (Cf. remarks on "The Messenger and his Function," pp. 367–369.)

And when the new order is at the fullness of the time, it begins where, as we now view it, the old leaves off. John the Baptist, its herald, speaks in the spirit of Elijah, its typical prophet, and is identified by the prediction of Malachi, its latest prophet. He regards himself as merely the Voice heard by the Second Isaiah, proclaiming the way of Jehovah (John i, 23; cf. Isa. xl, 3). Thus he breaks the pause by instituting a new surge of thought and power, pushing on toward completion the unfinality of the old movement. So by the time when, about the end of the first Christian century, the careful Jewish rabbis have fully determined the content and purity of their canon, enough literature of the new order is in hand to make up another which, just as carefully selected, is to the first as reality to vision, as fulfillment to promise.

BOOK III

THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY

Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me. . . . I am the way.— JESUS

But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for. — PAUL

THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY

BECAUSE the Jewish people, during the period between the Exile and the coming of Jesus, set such extraordinary value on their literature, coördinating its classics together into a single library or canon, we have called them the People of a Book. From that book or its component parts, which later ages called the Old Testament, they drew all that was authoritative for life and instruction. It was, as of the Jewish race it still is, their Bible; and as such its body of literature was regarded as practically closed and complete.

When Jesus came and made disciples he appealed to the same book. He was a thorough student of it; and it was as valuable to him as it was to the Jewish people of his time (cf. Luke xxiv, 27, 44; John v, 39). But it was valuable in a different way. To the scribes, who were the accredited Biblical scholars of his day, it was virtually a repository of dead rules, precepts, doctrines, to which they appended numerous minute distinctions and applications, technically called *midrash*[1] (a word meaning "investigation," "interpretation"). These oral additions became so numerous and so exclusively valued that the spirit of the original was well-nigh gone (cf. Mark vii, 9, 13). The Bible had suffered, in fact, the fate of becoming a classic, the fate of being treated as a stereotyped and finished product of the past. To Jesus, on the other hand, it was a book whose spirit and principles were living things; to be apprehended therefore with the freedom of a pure heart and sound sense. It was a book not merely of scholarship and erudition, but of the

[1] Cf. above, p. 407, footnote.

constant and permanent values of life. He handled it in such a way, as he taught, that its truth needed no labored explanation or analysis; it was self-evident.

NOTE. Jesus calls the scribes' additions to Scripture "tradition," *paradosis tōn presbuteron*; and as far as they obscured or traversed the true meaning of Scripture he regarded them as hurtful excrescences; cf. Matt. xv, 6; xxiii, 23.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, when little companies of his followers drew their faith and inspiration from the memory of his life, they did not at first think of themselves as other than loyal Jews; for whom, as for all other Jews, the Old Testament was the supreme literary and religious authority. Their new faith was to them the venerable Jewish faith and doctrine, with its meanings deepened and its prophecies fulfilled. It was some years, indeed, before they received the distinctive name of Christians (see Acts xi, 26). Their manner of belief was first called The Way (see Acts ix, 2); and they were first persecuted as a heretical sect of Jews. But the person who, to begin with, was most zealous to persecute them, Saul of Tarsus, who was himself originally a Pharisee — that is, of the strictest Jewish sect (Acts xxvi, 5) — became convinced that this Christian way of life, though called a sect, was really in the direct line of enlarged and fulfilled Judaism (see Acts xxiv, 14, 15). It is perhaps to St. Paul, indeed, that we owe the name The Way, as applied to Christianity. We adopt the name therefore by Scripture warrant, and consider the literature of the Christian way, that is, the New Testament, as the vital completion of the truth foreshadowed in the Old.

It was many years after Jesus' ministry before a distinctive Christian literature had so accumulated as to form the material for a New Testament canon. Meanwhile the Christians were the people of a life rather than of a book. "An epistle of Christ" (2 Cor. iii, 3) St. Paul, the great writer of epistles, calls them. It was the life that was in them, rather than

the books they wrote, that made them a power in the world; it was their distinctive Way of life, learned at first hand by familiar intercourse with a wise and gracious Master, that, as time and experience wrought their seasoning influence, created their literature, the literature of the New Testament.

Accordingly, it is with that personal source and type that we have first to deal; with the words and acts of Jesus, which in themselves were not only a wisdom of life but a skilled and finished literary power. To take note of this is the object proposed in the chapter on The Son of Man. How all this with its apostolic consequences got itself into biographical and historical record is considered in the chapter on The Literature of Fact. The chapter on The Literature of Values, following thereon, traces how the large meanings of the Christian Way were deduced from the ministry of Jesus and from the older literature of which Christianity is the heir. And finally, in the chapter on The Resurgence of Prophecy, is considered how the Christian Way from being a fulfillment projects itself in turn onward toward the limitless future, toward Isaiah's promise of "new heavens and a new earth" (cf. Isa. lxv, 17; Rev. xxi, 1, 2).

CHAPTER IX

THE SON OF MAN

[4 B.C. to A.D. 30]

WHATEVER estimate our religious affiliations have led us to form of the personality of Jesus, the fact with which our present study is concerned is that the whole New Testament literature centers in him. He is its inspiration, its vitality, its formative influence. Its interpretation of the older literature, its new light on the way of life, its clear conception of eternal values, all derive from the life, the words, the ministry of Jesus.

The New Testament writers are indeed thoroughly grounded, as was their Master, in Old Testament ideas. Its laws, its prophecies, its wisdom, its poetry, are constantly referred to and quoted by them, as things familiarly known. Thus in a very intimate way the New Testament is interwoven with the Old; nor does it profess in any sense to supersede the Old. Rather, it supplements and completes it. The older ideas, true as they are, it regards as essentially unfinal, incomplete, preparatory to something fuller and clearer (cf. Col. ii, 16, 17; Heb. x, 1); and the realization, the fulfillment, is embodied in personal form in Jesus. He actually is what the ancient prophets dreamed ought to be, and more. As one of his New Testament biographers puts it (John i, 4): "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

NOTE. By that same biographer, in the profoundest of the gospels, Jesus is introduced by a conception essentially literary: he is called the Word (*logos*) made flesh and dwelling among us (John i, 14); as if the

idea of God, inexpressible otherwise, were concentrated in a single word, and that word were spelled not in letters but in human life. Tennyson has embodied the idea in a stanza:

> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought;
> Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
> Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
> And those wild eyes that watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef.[1]

This is literary expression conceived in its ideal simplicity and its perfect power of intelligibility, — answering to the supreme purpose of revelation.

Our study of the New Testament period of the Biblical literature, therefore, naturally begins with the personal source from which its power and truth are derived; and to this end we designate him by the title which he himself chose and which none will deny him, The Son of Man.

I. Expectation and Answer

As the result of the literary ideals in which the Jewish race had been educated, there was at the time of Jesus' coming a widespread expectation, shared in by all classes, of a coming new order of things. In a general way that expectation had been derived from the older prophets, whose activity had subsided after the return from captivity and the rebuilding of the Temple, four centuries before. But since the time of the Maccabees, when the Book of Daniel was written (about 168 B.C.), a new species of literature, the apocalyptic, had become popular. In this literature the idea of the new order was conceived in terms at once more definite and more idealized. Thus the expectation was supported by a kind of fusion of two ideas: the prophetic, giving it moral substance, and the apocalyptic, giving it vividness. The new order was to be a kingdom of heaven. Its king,

[1] Tennyson, "In Memoriam," xxxvi.

who was to be of the stock of David, was designated somewhat vaguely as the Messiah, or, in its Greek equivalent, the Christ, meaning "the Anointed One." A more common designation, and still more vague but well understood, was "He that cometh," or "The Coming One" (cf. Matt. iii, 11; xi, 3). The result of his coming, as was supposed, would be a peremptory overturn of the existing government and the restoration of sovereignty to Israel. This hope had long been gathering head, and by the time Jesus came its fulfillment was generally felt to be near.

The Ideas that the Coming One must Meet

It is important to note how the prevailing idea of the new order shaped itself in men's imaginations. For if Jesus set himself definitely to inaugurate it he must both conform his teaching to current conceptions and correct these where they were wrong or excessive or one-sided. What was this kingdom of heaven to be like? What would be the character of its king, the Messiah? What would be the conditions of his reign? Such were the questions already in the air that must be met and answered. All sorts of imaginings, vague or vivid, pious or crafty, were enlisted in the inquiry; and whatever its form the expectation was intense, eager, ready to break out in revolt or fanaticism. Evidently the situation was one to be dealt with wisely, patiently, constructively. Men's ideas must not only be answered and appeased; they must first of all be educated.

Among the Literalists

The idea of the coming order most popularly prevalent was the apocalyptic. In accordance with this the new régime was figured as one of conquest and absolute dominion, in which as subjects of the Messiah the Jewish race was not only to be delivered from the power of Rome (that of course) but to have ascendancy over the whole world. That is, it was conceived in terms of earthly despotism, and its center of power was to be Jerusalem and Palestine. With this dream of worldly sovereignty was

mingled a supernatural element. The Messiah, who was imagined to correspond, was to be first of all an irresistible conqueror, who would come suddenly from heaven and overturn the existing order; and then he would reign in a divine power and splendor which nothing could withstand or rival. It was to be a kingdom inaugurated by miracle, and maintained not by the inner worth and integrity of its subjects but by the limitless might and glory of its absolute Monarch.

Such was the idea among the less thoughtful and more demonstrative. It would easily find the response of the floating masses, who were equally ready to be swayed by pretenders raising insurrections against Roman rule or by fanatics who would form a new religious sect. Already by the time of Jesus' coming several such movements had risen and been put down (cf. Acts v, 36, 37) — movements generally characterized by excess and violence, though having at heart the expected kingdom. There was a sect called the Zealots, apparently of revolutionary sentiments, from whom Jesus, in his large tolerance of human temperaments, chose one of his apostles (see Luke vi, 15; Acts i, 13). Men of all classes, it would seem, were to be educated for the new order.

NOTE. Of this Messianic expectancy Dr. Sanday ("Life of Christ in Recent Research," p. 81) says: "It may be . . . true that there were a good many Jews for whom the Messianic hope was more or less dormant. But I imagine that from the time of the Maccabees to the time of Barcochba there was a Messianic background — or something like it — to every popular movement that swept over Palestine. I cannot think that the Zealots, for instance, were either simple brigands or a purely political party without any admixture of religion. Just as the Book of Daniel reveals the spiritual atmosphere of the age to which it belongs, so also do the Psalms of Solomon reveal the like conditions a hundred years later, and the Assumption of Moses later still. . . . That the religious hopes as well as the political often took a very coarse and violent form, I regard as certain. Therefore it seems to me that if our Lord appealed to these hopes, He could not do so without to some extent correcting them."

To the more contemplative and devout-minded, however, and especially the common people remote from public affairs, the coming new order shaped itself in terms less material and political, and more as a spiritual emancipation and blessedness. Such people, for instance, were Simeon and Anna (Luke ii, 25, 38), an aged devout man and a prophetess in the time of Jesus' infancy, who were "looking for the consolation of Israel" and for "the redemption of Jerusalem." Such also was the councillor Joseph of Arimathea (Luke xxiii, 51), who was "looking for the kingdom of God." It was from this class of people, too, that the parents of Jesus came, and the cousins and friends from whom he selected his disciples (cf. John i, 35–42). It was on such a basis of character and hope as these represented that a sane and constructive conception of the kingdom and the Coming One could best be shaped.

Among the Spiritually Minded

I

The Prophetic Herald. One element in the Jewish expectation of the Messiah was that when he came he would be preceded by a herald or messenger, whose function it would be to prepare the way for him. This idea they drew, not from the popular apocalyptic literature but from the older prophets. "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye . . . the way of Jehovah" (Isa. xl, 3), for instance, was accepted as the prophecy of an event much later than the time of its utterance. There was also a prediction of a messenger to prepare Jehovah's way, given by the latest prophet Malachi, about four hundred years before (Mal. iii, 1). To the literal-minded this prediction was made realistic by the same prophet's assertion (Mal. iv, 5) that the herald was to be the prophet Elijah; who would supposedly come back from the unseen world for the purpose. Thus the imagination of the people had endowed the expected herald as well as the Messiah himself with mystic and super-earthly powers.

Doubtless, too, there was a variety of ideas, from the most material to the most spiritual, as to how this herald would be identified when he came. Their literature, in fact, had given them a personal image; and time and fancy had made this loom so large that any concrete object answering to it must almost necessarily be more or less estranging. In other words, both the herald and the Messiah, when they came, had to meet the inevitable sense of shrinkage that seems to ensue when an object of imagination becomes an object of actual sense-perception.

The Idea Made Real

John the Baptist, whose mission it was to be the forerunner of Jesus, was a kinsman of his, six months his elder (Luke i, 36). He was of priestly stock, born of parents who were of the Puritan type of Jewish piety (Luke i, 5, 6). St. Luke relates that his mission, to go before the Messiah in the spirit and power of Elijah, was prophesied of him before his birth (Luke i, 17); and as a young man both his training and temperament led him to the same kind of ascetic and austere life as had been lived by Elijah the Tishbite more than eight centuries before (cf. 1 Kings xvii–xxii; also 2 Kings i, 7, 8). Until his public ministry began he lived in the Judean wilderness, perhaps in one of the numerous caves of the region; and his dress, diet, and habits emphasized the almost savage sternness of his attitude to life. It was as if by such symbolic means he would warn men to return from the artificial and degenerate tendencies of civilization to primitive first principles.

"John the Baptist," says Professor J. R. Seeley,[1] "was like the Emperor Nerva. In his career it was given him to do two things — to inaugurate a new régime, and also to nominate a successor who was far greater than himself." Of these two things he was aware from the beginning of his career, and ordered his ministry accordingly. Adopting a primitive custom, he embodied his requirement in a symbolic

[1] Seeley, "Ecce Homo," p. 10.

act, namely, the baptism of those who heeded his word and repented of their evil life. As he administered the rite, however, he told his hearers that this baptism was only preliminary to something greater. Expressed in water, it meant merely the negative virtue of cleansing and change of purpose; while the successor who was coming would impart the positive virtue, symbolized by the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. iii, 11). Such was the acted metaphor by which he gave his message a spiritual significance. He also figured his successor, when at length he saw him, as an atoning lamb (John i, 29, 36); a symbol drawn from the priestly ideas familiar to all Jews, with perhaps a reminiscence of Isa. liii, 7. On the principles involved in these symbols John met the prevailing expectation, proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. When questioned who he was, however, he denied all claim to being the Messiah, or Elijah, or any other ancient prophet (John i, 19–27). He was only the Voice, he said, to proclaim the Coming One, and a Mightier than he was to succeed him. John's personal character, therefore, in its complete self-effacement, precluded all idea of inaugurating a new order by revolution or violence except the spiritual revolution involved in repentance. The preparation he advocated was not of national insurgency nor of any concerted movement, but of the individual mind and heart.

Substance and Tone of his Message

The substance and tone of John's preaching corresponded to the austerity of his life. It was the kind of message natural to one who, living apart from men and their affairs, lacked sympathy with them; in this respect like that of his prophetic predecessors Elijah and Amos. It was stern and minatory; demanding repentance; pronouncing censure and judgment; sparing none on account of family or race or position. The coming kingdom he portrayed in terms of doom and punishment, and the Coming One as a bringer of vengeance and severity.

The Christ, in his anticipation, was to be not the Friend and Brother of mankind, but the Chastiser and Judge; and the régime corresponding was figured as an ax ready to hew down an unfruitful tree, and as a fan which would separate wheat from chaff that the latter might be burned. It was the sternness of the old Jewish dispensation concentrated into a threat of retribution and doom. For the ancient idea of the day of Jehovah men's newer imagination had substituted the idea of the kingdom of heaven; but like the prophets before him John attacked their too easy optimism by warning them that if they pictured it in colors of fancy rather than principle they were liable to find it a *dies iræ*.

NOTE. In the most striking Old Testament prophecies of a coming Personage, or of a regenerating people, there is a note of severity mingled with the beneficence; cf. Isa. xi, 1–5, and especially verse 4, which was in John's mind. See also Isa. xli, 15, where that severity is predicated of the people, and xlix, 2, where the Servant of Jehovah himself speaks. The Day of Jehovah, also, was divested of its idle optimism and pictured in terms of judgment and wrath; see Amos v, 18; Joel i, 15; Zeph. i, 14, 15; Isa. xiii, 6, 9.

At the End of an Era

John the Baptist, one of the noblest, is also one of the most pathetic figures of history. He is a solitary representative of the primitive prophetic ideal; standing between the old era and the new, just where his prophecy must maintain its eternal validity, and yet where the fulfillment, coming immediately after, makes the prophecy itself obsolete. This is expressed in the tribute that Jesus paid to him: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. xi, 11).

From the literary point of view John's announcement of the Christ kingdom is an instance of the foreshortening of prophetic vision, such as we have already noted in the earlier prophets. He sees the kingdom as it is destined ultimately

to be, sternly triumphant over evil. He sees the final victory of right and truth. But he has the idea that this must come by revolution, by a sudden catastrophe; and this fills all his field of vision. The long, slow means by which the new order must be brought about, the growing spirit of good-will and fellowship by which alone such a kingdom can prevail, he has not yet discovered. His imagination has fed itself on the sternness of the old régime, and his sense of the power of love and good-will is undeveloped. Nor can he realize this until he sees it actually embodied in the life and work of his successor, and then, indeed, only dimly. So even after he has proclaimed and identified Jesus as the Christ he falls into doubt whether after all he was right, and from the prison to which his faithful preaching has brought him sends to Jesus asking, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" (Matt. xi, 3). Jesus' answer to the question is merely to enumerate the various kinds of good work he is doing, as if bidding John judge for himself whether these fulfill Messianic conditions.

II

The Old Order Changes. The coming of Jesus, as history proves, was the coming of a radically new order and emphasis of things, wherein all that was good in the old remained as valid and integral as ever. In that transition the old order insensibly passed away, or rather became absorbed in the new. In other words, the coming of the Messiah, with all that it meant, though it eventually caused a revolution in men's minds, was at first an event as natural and unnoticed as an event of ordinary life. Of the Servant of Jehovah, who was held to be a prophetic type of the Messiah, the Second Isaiah had said, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa. liii, 2). The case of Jesus' coming was analogous. It was not by display or external

claims that men were to recognize and accept him, but by the intrinsic worth and power that were in him, as seen by honest and pure-minded men.

The Christ-Problem

At the beginning of this changed order, the Coming One whom John announced and the Jewish people expected must somehow be recognized and identified when he came. But the very idea of such a Personage was vague, and must be formed; was crude, and must be freed from alloy; was hazy with ages of dim imagination, and must be resolved into an object of common life. John's own identification of him was made not from personal acquaintance, but from a mystic sign (see John i, 31, 32). All that the Christ was to do and be was yet to be revealed; and even John, as we have seen (Matt. xi, 2), became doubtful of his own identification. Meanwhile, if Jesus was indeed the Coming One, how should he meet men's expectation in such a way that they should not misapprehend or misuse the fulfillment of their hopes, and that the idea of what the Messiah and his kingdom essentially are should be formed in right principle and proportion? Such was the problem which Jesus at the outset of his ministry had to raise and solve.

The solution of it was the simplest and sanest possible; a model of quiet wisdom and good sense.

To begin with, he came assuming nothing. He went from Galilee to John's baptism as a man of the common people, a layman, a carpenter from the obscure town of Nazareth. He did not assume to be the Messiah nor claim any superiority to ordinary manhood. He left that rather for men to find out from their own recognition of him. The attesting sign of his unique greatness, and the voice from heaven, were personal revelations perceived only by him and John (Matt. iii, 16, 17; Mark i, 10, 11; John i, 33, 34). Nor, on the other hand, did he assume *not* to be the Messiah. Rather, the words he spoke and the works he did corresponded naturally to a more than human greatness in him.

He simply lived that wise, balanced, consistent life which men came to recognize as the normal life of manhood, and let that speak for itself; while, at the same time, if occasions of supernatural wisdom and power came his way they were used as a matter of course, as belonging naturally to his plane of being. It was all regarded as in the course and compass of a true human life. The answer which Jesus himself gave at the end to Pilate, when the latter asked him whether he was really a king, kept itself within human terms. "To this end have I been born," he said, "and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John xviii, 37). To be a true man, neither shirking nor transcending the claims of true manhood, was his simple and consistent answer to the expectations of his age.

NOTE. That Jesus' design was not only to meet and satisfy but also to correct and clarify men's expectations is indicated by the course he took. To quote from H. B. Sharman: "If he considered himself called to be the Christ of expectation, no harm could come from being acknowledged as such; if, on the other hand, he was conscious of being possessed by new conceptions, he would hardly choose to make claims or awaken hopes by talking in Messianic phraseology."[1]

From the outset of his ministry the human life presented itself to him, and he in turn presented it to men, as a kind of problem to be solved, with its questions of order and emphasis, its progressive stages, its proper coördination of elements. For this purpose he chose disciples to be with him, observers and learners, taking them into a sort of partnership, as if all were to work out the problem together and all were to share in its avails. In other words, the Christ-problem was propounded to the world as an all-men's problem, and not as the monopoly of one; and to every man its duties and possibilities were freely open. Thus his ministry was in the most valid sense the translation of the Christ-idea into terms of the noblest and deepest manhood.

[1] *Biblical World*, January, 1910, p. 60.

III

Initiating the Christ-Idea. How Jesus chose to work out the problem of his mission, by identifying the Messianic life with the typical life of manhood and carrying this to its height, may be seen, in its beginnings, in some of the early experiences of his ministry.

His Baptism and its Sequel

While John the Baptist was preaching and making disciples, Jesus came to him; not, however, to become his disciple, but to receive baptism at his hands (Matt. iii, 13–17; Mark i, 9–11; Luke iii, 21, 22). According to St. Matthew's account John was reluctant to baptize Jesus, recognizing that in the case of one so exalted as he the symbolism of the rite was meaningless. Jesus, however, interpreting it for himself as the fulfillment of a righteous requirement, insisted on his baptism as a means of identifying himself with all who would accept the ordinance (Matt. iii, 15). It was his first public act of taking man's duty without assuming to be more than man; his symbolic way of saying that his life's problem required not a break with the past or with men's good customs, but a fulfillment of all its good promise. It was immediately answered by recognition from heaven. He was aware of the form of a dove resting upon him (a new symbolism), and a voice saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Mark i, 11; cf. Psa. ii, 7; Isa. xlii, 1). It is of no importance to inquire whether or not more persons than Jesus and John were aware of this supernatural sign (cf. John i, 32). Enough that Jesus himself was conscious of his unique distinction, and that this was the dominating element in his life's problem. To him the essence of Messiahship was to be the Son of God. It was the assurance of this that guaranteed his high mission in the world. Thenceforth he lived and worked in the spirit of that idea. As Son of God he was to be the embodiment of the Father's

nature and will and grace; to reproduce perfectly, as it were, the family likeness and character.

His Wilderness Ordeal

The first act of Jesus after his baptism indicates his sense of the tremendous life problem involved in being the Son of God (Matt. iv, 1–11; Mark i, 12, 13; Luke iv, 1–13). "Straightway the spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness," — in such strong phrase St. Mark describes the mysterious impulse that possessed him. It seems the evangelist's way of describing how deep was Jesus' craving for solitude and for opportunity to think out the career that his divine distinction entailed. The Son of God must see and choose the godlike way of impressing himself upon men and of building a kingdom in the world; for to be the Son of God included all this.

If the temptation of Jesus was a fact, the account of it must have come ultimately from him; for no reporter or observer was present. The terms in which it is described must therefore be such as are at the same time most real to him and most apprehensible to men. But the depth of such an inner experience is beyond the power of literal words to convey. Each individual temptation is told rather in a kind of parable or symbol, whose scope or principle is much greater than a single act. The symbolic act suggested — making bread of stones, casting one's self from a pinnacle, giving formal obeisance to a potentate — may indeed seem odd and arbitrary, until we realize the spirit of it; and then nothing can be more real and significant.

The temptations thus reported of Jesus all bore on the question how the Son of God should use his power. The reiterated plea of the evil spirit was, "If thou be the Son of God," do this and that. Jesus' answer in each case limits itself to what *man* should be and do. Jesus will not use his divine endowment in a way that humanity cannot share in or benefit by; nor will he yield to worldly and selfish principles of mastership. To do any of these proposed things

would at once put him on a plane of living where humanity could not be at one with him; and his sense of divinity impelled him rather to union with all and to fellowship in good works. His answers to Satan, all quoted from Scripture and from a single book of Scripture (namely, Deuteronomy; cf. Deut. viii, 3; vi, 16; vi, 13; x, 20),[1] are but a recourse to the store of literary guidance that has long been available to every man. So in all his temptations, though he is aware that unlimited power and privilege are his, he makes the use of it most godlike by most truly observing human limitations.

His Ministry of Familiar Friendship

After his return from the forty days' ordeal of the wilderness, Jesus' first visit was to the scene of his baptism, where John was still making disciples. Here he began a ministry, not officially, as if he would be either a rival or coadjutor to John, but in the private way of personal intercourse and conversation (John i, 19–iv, 42). The gospel of John gives this part of his history; unmentioned by the other evangelists, perhaps because it was so private and domestic, or more likely because the disciples from whom the synoptic Gospels came were not yet called. As Jesus mingled with the crowd at the Jordan, John the Baptist immediately recognized him as the one who had been supernaturally pointed out; and two of his disciples, detaching themselves from the company, followed Jesus. Three were added to their number on this and the succeeding day, as they journeyed northward toward Galilee.

So his first appeal was to young men of high and pure ideals, who obeyed the attraction of his personality and attached themselves to him as companions and learners. Some of them, it would seem, were acquaintances (cf. John i, 45, where Jesus is spoken of as well known), who first became aware of their neighbor's high distinction by the testimony of John, which they seem to have accepted as a matter of course.

[1] See above, p. 227.

His fame as a teacher and worker of signs (as the author of the Fourth Gospel calls his miracles) rapidly spread both in Galilee and Jerusalem, to which latter place he went to attend a feast and meet the leaders of the nation (see John ii, 13). All this, until John's work was broken off by his imprisonment (see Matt. iv, 12), may be regarded as the private and domestic preliminary to Jesus' ministry, while he was, so to speak, broaching his ideas among those who would respond to them most simply and candidly. It is in these early months of his work that we meet with the ingenuous young men who became his most intimate companions; with his family circle of mother and kinsfolk at Cana and Capernaum (John ii, 1–12); with men of open mind and thought like Nicodemus (John iii); and with people of less cultured and sophisticated mind like the woman and people of Samaria (John iv). The prevailing note of this period of his career is familiar intercourse and companionship; as if he would first get acquainted with the various classes with whom he was to deal.

His Manifesto at Nazareth

In course of time, after his distinctive work had revealed its character, he came to Nazareth, where his early life had been passed, and where his old neighbors were naturally eager to see their townsman who was becoming so famous (Luke iv, 16–30). On the Sabbath, as his custom was, he entered the synagogue and, standing up to read, selected and applied to himself the passage found in Isaiah lxi, 1–3, wherein the Servant of Jehovah, described by the Second Isaiah, is represented as taking upon himself and defining the spirit of his ministry. This reading, and the accompanying comment, may be taken as Jesus' conception of the Messiahship to which he was anointed, told to those who knew him best and had always known him.

By this manifesto, instead of connecting his work with the popular apocalyptic visions, with their ambitious notions

of a spectacular kingdom and a despotic monarch, he identified himself definitely with the meekest and most unobtrusive character portrayed in Scripture: the Servant of Jehovah, whose spirit of life was wisdom, sympathy, and silent sacrifice (cf. Isa. xlii, 1–4; Matt. xii, 18–21). He made no assumption of grandeur or dignity. He claimed only a career of good-will, good works, and universal helpfulness.

To identify himself, however, with one of the most sacred prophecies seemed to his townsmen too great an effrontery. Besides, he had declined to work for mere display such miracles as he had wrought elsewhere. So they would not listen to him; and his subsequent ministry had to be carried on away from his home.

Throughout his ministry, as these and many other incidents show, Jesus, though conscious all the while of his Messianic distinction, was concerned that that fact should not be proclaimed or assumed on his part, but recognized on the part of men. He was concerned also that men should know and honor him not for his supernatural powers nor for any display of greatness but for the intrinsic truth of manhood that they saw in him. Thus, as they companied familiarly with him, they were getting something beyond personal acquaintance and intimacy. They were learning what manhood raised to its noblest powers is, and what life is under the leading of the divine Spirit, in the works and experiences of human life. It was this that he had at heart. He desired that the Christ men came to recognize in him should be the essential Christ and not depend on his fame or his profession. Only so could it be of practical and personal value to them.

His Adopted Title

So, though when required on oath to acknowledge himself he said plainly that he was Son of God and Messiah (see Matt. xxvi, 63, 64), yet the title by which he habitually called himself was Son of Man; by which he would seem to have meant the true and typical man, or, as we should

say, manhood completely realized. Even this designation he took not assertively but indirectly; speaking of the Son of Man in the third person, as if the latter were an idealized being whose character was to be manifested through discipline and experience. The question what the true man should do and be seemed to be on his mind at all stages of his career, and for other dignity apart from this he had no ambition.

In adopting this title Jesus chose a term which was comparatively unworn, though it does occur with somewhat hazy meaning in some passages of the apocalyptic literature. It was a term, too, which as used would rouse no false or premature connotations in men's minds. This was an important point gained. To have called himself the Messiah at the outset would have been to burden himself with a title which men had already filled with their own preconceived ideas, and it would have been hard if not impossible to divest it of accretions and infuse the true meaning, both human and divine, into it. To have called himself the Son of God would have been at once to separate his personality from the interests of common humanity and to have transferred himself to a sphere above them. But in calling himself Son of Man, Jesus was adopting a term by which he could make common cause with all men; and by filling the idea with the fuller meaning of his life he could raise it, and with it the whole conception of manhood worth, to its highest power, where, indeed, it would be equivalent to the other terms, "Christ" or "Messiah," and "Son of God." It was really the most modest claim that he could make, considering what he was, but as he translated it into actual life it contained the values of the highest. And he lived as if it were his one business on earth to explore and realize to the full manhood's possibilities as actuated by the Spirit of God.

NOTES. 1. *Conventional Use of the Term "Son of God."* The term "Son of God" was already much worn in the world's use, as a complimentary epithet for great rulers and leaders. It was in some such vague

sense, doubtless, that a Roman centurion was moved to call Jesus a son of God (Matt. xxvii, 54) on witnessing the portents attending his death.

2. *Jesus' Use of the Term "Son of Man."* "We must never forget," says Professor Sanday, "that this is the name which our Lord chose specially for Himself, and which He appears to have preferred above every other. The other names He purposely kept in the background; but this He used freely and without hesitation, though even this He employs objectively and in the third person, hinting rather than expressly claiming that in speaking of the Son of Man He is speaking of Himself.[1]

II. The Literary Element in Jesus' Ministry

Jesus himself wrote nothing. What record we have of his words and works comes from reports made in the Christian community, for teaching and catechizing purposes, and traceable to about a generation after his death. This record, which we have in the four gospels, consists of oral discourses, given mostly in a familiar and conversational way, with no apparent attempt at literary or rhetorical effect. Any thought, indeed, of self-conscious or academic art in connection with Jesus' words is almost like a profanation. As we study them more intimately, however, we become aware how exactly they are adapted to their subject, their occasion, and their audience. This is their obvious literary excellence; and this, of course, belongs to that perfection of art which conceals the processes of art and identifies it with nature.

That Jesus' discourses produced on his discriminating hearers the effect of fine and finished utterance is indicated in the question asked about him by the Jews of the capital: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John vii, 15), and by the answer of certain officers sent to arrest him: "Never man so spake" (John vii, 46). The same thought was dimly in the mind of the common multitude, though they could not well define it, when they expressed their astonishment at the self-evidencing character of his words, so different from the style of the scribes

[1] Sanday, "Life of Christ in Recent Research," pp. 194, 195.

(Matt. vii, 28, 29). It was a recognition of the matter and manner of his speech as a prime literary power.

The main element of literary perfection in Jesus' words is their perfect keeping alike with a human personality and with all that we can conceive of the divine. The difficulty for critics who would deny these utterances to him is to find a writer great enough to have invented them. Such a writer must needs be of Messianic caliber. Even though transmitted to us through the memory of his hearers, there is a quality in his words as unique in literature as is his personality in history and human experience.

It does not belong to the scope of this book to give in analysis or systematic arrangement the subject matter of his teachings. We are concerned rather with their literary relations: that is, their manner of expression and adaptedness to audience and occasion. To this end we will consider various aspects of his teachings, as these were called forth by the circumstances in which he was placed.

I

His General Public Utterances. "These words of mine" (*mou tous logous toutous*) is the phrase by which Jesus refers to the Sermon on the Mount, which he is just finishing (Matt. vii, 24, 26). It makes an unpretending literary claim for his public speech: no display of eloquence, no assumption of scholarly logic; but just familiar talk. And yet it has not the loose discursiveness of ordinary talk; it is close-knit and ordered, and there are no superfluous words.

The so-called Sermon on the Mount, given most fully in Matthew v–vii, and in substance in Luke vi, 20–49, may be taken as the type of discourse by which Jesus imparted his teaching to receptive and candid audiences. It was addressed to his newly made disciples (see Matt. v, 1; Luke vi, 20); men who had attached themselves to him not out of idle curiosity or with critical design, but with desire to learn and

think for themselves. But it was overheard by multitudes (Matt. vii, 28; Luke vi, 17); for his discourses were never esoteric nor contained things meant for a mystery to one class and clearness to another. They were really addressed to mankind in general, and used the ideas current among ordinary people. Both the disciples and the larger multitudes could be assumed to be acquainted with the law and with the religious sentiment of their day, and it was upon these that he built his teachings.

It is worth while to note how the style of Jesus' public utterances compares with the Old Testament types of style.

Comparison with Earlier Scripture

The ancient prophets, addressing the nation as a whole and at times of national crisis, were impassioned, oratorical, vehement, with a tendency to the rhythmical and poetic. The sages, or wise men, addressing audiences in the didactic tone, developed the *mashal* or proverb, as a vehicle for such utterance, to a fine artistry of phrasing and pointed sentence structure; rising at times, as in Job and the first section of Proverbs, to sustained poetic sublimity and intensity. The later writings, like the *megilloth*, were to a notable degree keyed to the more self-conscious and refined literary forms.[1] In Jesus' teaching we find no lack of poetic beauty, or sturdy vigor, or clean-cut phrasing and point; but all this is subdued to the tone of the conversational, the familiar, the idiom of common life and affairs. Pascal, himself a master of style, remarks of this quality: "Jesus Christ said grand things so simply that it seems as though he had not thought about them, and yet so clearly that one sees he must have reflected upon them. This clearness joined with this simplicity is wonderful."[2] This quite befitted his supreme object, which was to be helpful to all men, from the humblest up, to men not in specialized classes or as a nation, but as living the universal life of man.

[1] Cf. p. 484, above.

[2] Pascal, "Thoughts," Benj. E. Smith trans., p. 121.

"What is this? a new teaching!" was the response of his hearers at Capernaum when they heard his words in the synagogue and saw them backed with mighty spiritual power (Mark i, 27). Of the qualities in his general public discourse which reveal him as a unique teacher and personality, we may here note three salient things.

Contrasts with Current Methods

1. Their uniform employment of the simplest language and imagery, dealing with plain truths of life. This was a new note in his day; for the scribes, who were the accredited teachers, tended to wire-drawn and petty interpretations of the law and to a wooden, academic style. Jesus' discourses deal much in the familiar analogical figures simile and metaphor; and these are always drawn from everyday objects and carried enough into detail to indicate the full value of their lesson. This may be exemplified by the so-called Sermon on the Mount in Matthew v–vii. After the Beatitudes (v, 1–12), which constitute a kind of text, the discourse is introduced by the metaphors of the salt and the light (vss. 13–16). The detailed similes of the houses on the rock and on the sand (vii, 24–27), which form the peroration, are a summary and practical application of the whole. The figures of the lilies of the field (vi, 28–30), of the mote and the beam (vii, 3–5), and of the good and the corrupt trees (vii, 18–20) are instances selected at random which may show how masterfully he employed homely imagery for the weightiest thought. It was his power to make great elemental truths clear and self-evidencing which called forth the remark of a biographer, "The common people heard him gladly" (Mark, xii, 37).

2. Their prominently paradoxical and thought-provoking cast. In the old *mashal* or proverb literature there was often cultivated, for the sake of stimulating thought, a kind of riddling or enigma element; one species of *mashal*, indeed, was called *ḥidah*, "dark saying" (cf. Prov. i, 6). Something

of this principle is freely made use of by Jesus. He is not averse to using a paradox or half-truth when his purpose of making men think is served thereby. One is aware of this as soon as one reflects on the Beatitudes, which ascribe blessedness to just the opposite qualities from those which are usually accounted blessed, — to the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the maligned and persecuted. He states some of his important teachings, also, in a form so strange and one-sided as to rouse a vigorous protest in the hearer's mind, until the meaning is subjected to a spiritual test. Such, for instance, are his injunction to turn the left cheek to him who smites you on the right (Matt. v, 39); his remark that one who follows him must hate his nearest earthly kin (Luke xiv, 26); and his solemn declaration, which he himself followed out, that he who loses his life in the cause of truth shall find it (Matt. x, 39). In all these, it would seem, Jesus deliberately accepts the risk of scorn and misunderstanding, trusting to men's saner second thoughts. But like all his words they are an appeal to men's spiritual good sense; and men of a spirit like his will understand and appropriate them. Our many centuries of conversance with them have adjusted our minds to these words of his; but as first uttered they must have been to a degree startling and mystifying.

3. Their absoluteness of assertion and tone. This is especially notable in the section of the Sermon on the Mount wherein Jesus deals with the Mosaic law and with men's traditions (Matt. v, 17–48). Of the hard and stereotyped ideas that prevailed concerning murder, adultery, divorce, oath-taking, retaliation, his pronouncements were: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, . . . but *I* say unto you"; thus correcting and reversing long-established ideas and customs on his own personal assertion. His first person singular is not egoism; it is spiritual authority. In the same way, by both precept and example, he took such

liberties as a sound spirit dictated with the unwritten customs of the sabbath and of fasting (cf. Matt. xii, 1–8; Mark ii, 18, 19); making these things what they were meant to be, not ends of life or cultus but means and factors of mercy and sincerity. All this, which handled old traditions so freely, was really in the interests of a more perfectly fulfilled law and a higher because more inward standard of righteousness.

Jesus' absoluteness of assertion is founded on truth which once heard cannot be gainsaid. The sound sense of man, seeing it, intuitively assents to it. Hence Jesus does not present truth by process of argumentation or philosophy, as if it had to pass through uncertain logical stages. It can, however, be made clear by illustration and analogy, and these means are freely employed. But the inner logic of his words is intuitive and absolute. Men cannot hear them without the sense that they are authoritative for conscience, nor gainsay them without doing violence to their spiritual nature. It was this absolute quality of his words, especially, which so contrasted Jesus' method with that of the scribes.

II

His Teaching in Parables. There came a time in Jesus' ministry when, rather abruptly it would seem, he changed the manner of his teaching. The disciples, indeed, who were in constant intercourse with him, he continued to instruct by literal and expository methods, giving them the more inward elements of his truth as they were able to apprehend them. This is especially noticeable in the discourses reported in the gospel of John; and even these he regarded as relatively primitive (cf. John iii, 12; xvi, 12). For the floating multitude, however, who might hear him only casually, or be actuated merely by the curiosity or enthusiasm of the crowd, he put his teaching in the form of parable. This new departure, with the first group of parables thus given, is narrated in Matthew xiii and Mark iv.

The new style of discourse at once excited inquiry. "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" the disciples asked Jesus when they were alone with him again. His answer indicated that he had adopted that manner of teaching in order to discriminate between different kinds of hearers: between those who were in an inner circle with him and outsiders. "To you," he said, "has been given the secret of the kingdom of God; but to the outsiders it must all come in a Parable, that, as Isaiah said, they may see and yet not see"[1] (Mark iv, 11; cf. Isa. vi, 9, 10). With a similar implication he had ended his first parable with the words, "He that hath ears, let him hear" (Matt. xiii, 9); as if his parables required a peculiar sense of things to understand.

The Wisdom of the Method

In the parables of Jesus we see the highest development of the *mashal*, or analogical type of literary discourse. This, it will be remembered, is the vehicle of the Hebrew Wisdom, employed in various forms in the Old Testament, mostly in maxims or proverbs. The parables of Jesus are not works of fancy, like fables, wherein, as in Jotham's parable (Judg. ix, 8–15), inanimate things are personified and talk; not allegories, like Our Lady Wisdom in Proverbs (Prov. viii, ix), wherein abstract qualities figure as characters: they are literal situations and incidents of everyday life, so told as to suggest an inner and spiritual lesson. Thus for the instruction of the multitudes, or as he called them "outsiders" (*tois exō*), he chose the medium which of all literary forms is most attractive, most easily grasped and remembered, — namely, the story or narrative form. So far as form was concerned, a story would be much more easily apprehended than a logically built or closely compacted discourse; and thus its truth would be available for common as well as for cultured men.

[1] See Burkitt, "The Gospel History and its Transmission," pp. 84 ff. I have quoted his translation of Jesus' remark.

NOTE. In the section of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" referred to and partly quoted on page 527 above, this distinction between expository and narrative discourse, as related to its intelligibility for different capacities of hearers, is thus described:

> For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
> Where truth in closest words shall fail,
> When truth embodied in a tale
> Shall enter in at lowly doors.

But this is only one side of the matter. Jesus adopted the parable method, he said, in order that the outsiders might see and yet not see. There was an esoteric purpose in it. The story has a meaning beyond its literal details. It must be translated from literal to spiritual, or, as we may say, from outer realism to inner. To this end the hearer is not left passive and merely receptive: he must exert his own powers of realization and interpretation to get a spiritual value out of it. And to do this he must approach it in the spirit of it. The parables are like a combination lock, which cannot be opened until one has the right combination; then all is clear, and its truth is grasped in fit relation and balance.[1]

There is wisdom also in its lack of argumentative or impassioned appeal. Being a story true to life, it cannot be denied or disproved. The hearer can take exception only to what he imagines it to mean, not to what is literally said. At the same time, being an appeal to the reflective powers, the parable, as such, radiates rather light than heat. There is nothing in it to incite passion, no catchwords of fanaticism or revolution. The parables are thus a simple yet masterly means of getting the rank and file of the people to think. They listen in dispassionate mood, as people who are merely entertained; and yet until they are spiritually adjusted to the implication of the story, they do not understand.

[1] Cf. above, p. 452.

It was a time when just such wisdom as this was imperatively needed. A main reason why Jesus chose the parable form of public teaching just at this stage of his ministry relates to the great expectation which was prevalent, and whose fulfillment both he and John had announced as near at hand. That expectation was now to be met and its idea clarified: the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven. His ministry was just then at the height of its popularity, and crowds were pressing upon him to hear his words and see his works of power. His first parables had to be spoken from a boat, the crowd upon the shore was so great (Matt. xiii, 2). Their interest in him was the interest of the crowd. Their minds were inflamed with the notion of a coming kingdom; and he seemed to them so eminently fitted to inaugurate it that, as the Fourth Gospel records, they were minded to take him by force and make him king (John vi, 15). Their conceptions of a kingdom, however, were of the rudest sort. We may describe them in the words of Dr. Alfred Plummer: "The ideas of the multitude," he says, "were for the most part vague; and in their want of knowledge they degraded and materialized it. They thought of the Kingdom as a perpetual banquet. The ideas of the upper classes were more definite, but not more spiritual. They thought of it as a political revolution. Roman rule was to be overthrown, and a Jewish monarchy of great magnificence was to be restored."[1] These ideas, such as they were, the stir of the times and the enthusiasm of the crowd had stimulated to the danger point. It was a situation wherein untold consequences hung on the wisdom of Jesus' words and acts.

The Secret of the Kingdom

Here then, we may truly say, was a crisis in Jesus' career of teaching: a supreme problem for literary sagacity and skill. The tense situation must be dealt with. It would tolerate no delay or evasion. Those crude ideas must be corrected.

[1] Plummer, "Commentary on Matthew," p. 62.

Not only must what was erroneous in them be cleared away, but the true conception must be put in its place. Jesus must define the kingdom in such a way that the common people's enthusiasm, so inflammable and eager, should be restrained until sane and reasonable thinking could set in and take control; and at the same time he must impart a wholly new principle and point of view. Evidently the situation called not for eloquence or impassioned exhortation. The crowds must not be incited to act but sobered and diverted to think; and as the upshot of their thinking they must be made to realize what this kingdom of heaven essentially is.

Accordingly, Jesus' earlier parables, fitted to the capacity of the multitude, devote themselves to explaining, in illustrations drawn from common life and experience, what the kingdom of heaven is *like*. It is like seed sown; like growth from a mustard seed; like leaven; like search for a lost coin; like investing all one's property in a precious pearl. It is notable how many of these parables of the kingdom, and especially the early ones that start the idea, are concerned with the phenomenon of growth, of evolution. It is Jesus' way of showing men that the kingdom is not a spectacular thing, coming upon men from without and astonishing the world, but a natural process arising from a new vital germ within their hearts. By analogies drawn from various aspects of husbandry he shows that the kingdom is "like a man sowing his seed, which then grows from stage to stage naturally and silently, until at last the harvest is ripe."[1] (Cf. Mark iv, 26–29.) From these analogies of growth, which he simply suggested, letting them work on the minds of the crowd, he could go on naturally in his more literal expositions to teach that instead of a sudden and startling affair the kingdom was something whose coming could not be dated by external signs at all, because

[1] Burkitt, "The Gospel History and its Transmission," p. 87.

it was within the heart of man (Luke xvii, 20, 21). And instead of a government under the sway of the ambition or self-indulgence of rulers, it was a character developed in the heart of the subject, a character growing by its own inner forces to noblest things. Thus, to men whose minds were occupied with the gratification of the senses he gives in parable form the substance of the idea later expressed by St. Paul, that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. xiv, 17).

From Lay to Learned

Nor was it merely to the floating and unattached multitude to whom the coming kingdom was a luxury and a banquet that his parables were addressed, though he began with them. To such it was fitting that the kingdom be described in evolutionary terms (seed sown, leaven, secret growth), to correct and mollify their fanatical ideas of revolution. To men of leading also, whose ideas of empire were more rational, he employed the same manner of teaching, in somewhat more elaborately constructed parables; his object being to regulate men's ambitions and to make them sensible not only of rights and emoluments but of duties and responsibilities. These worldly ambitions were frequently thrust upon him, even by the disciples who were most familiar with his way (see, for an instance, Mark x, 35–41). Being so near him, and seeing the grandeur of his personality, they took occasion to put in their plea as office-seekers in the coming monarchy. Even after his resurrection these material ideas still clung to them; and one of his last teachings before he ascended was to disabuse their minds of a premature notion of the kingdom (Acts i, 6, 7). So to the disciples themselves, and to all thinking men, many parables were given to illustrate their attitude to the kingdom. He taught them through this analogical method that they were like stewards, responsible for the administration of property (Luke xvi, 1–12); like laborers, hired to work in a vineyard

(Matt. xx, 1–16); like men intrusted with capital which was to be used in a master's business (Matt. xxv, 14–30); like bridesmaids at a wedding, keeping their lamps filled and ready to meet the bridegroom (Matt. xxv, 1–13). Some of his later parables, also, were aimed at the responsible leaders of the nation, who were recreant to their high trust: like stewards who abused the servants sent to receive the master's due and finally killed the son (Matt. xxi, 33–41); and like invited guests who would not attend a feast and whose place was accordingly taken by an assemblage of poor and crippled (Matt. xxii, 1–14). All these have direct reference to the idea of the kingdom, setting forth in narrative and as it were *in situ* the active working of its spiritual principles.

Thus Jesus' parables, simple and transparent as they were, in effect were his most revolutionary utterances, because they aimed at reversing men's standards of values. This, however, not by suppressing their natural ambitions in life, but by clarifying and directing these. It was a kind of teaching which set the elements of life in sound relation and proportion, so that men from the humblest up could feel what things were of supreme importance and what merely secondary or valueless.

III

His Encounters with Human Falsity. The general tone of Jesus' intercourse with men, it would seem, was gentle and gracious, patient with the sincere-minded however dull or feeble, and so little disposed to display that a biographer found in him the fulfillment of Isaiah's description of Jehovah's servant:

> He will not strive nor cry aloud;
> Neither will any one hear his voice in the streets.
> (Matt. xii, 19; cf. Isa. xlii, 2)

His mission, as he said, was not to judge and censure men, but to give them such light that they could judge themselves

(cf. John xii, 47, with ix, 39; Luke xii, 14). Hence his general manner of teaching: not seeking to convince or refute by argument but to make the truth luminous by illustration and example, so that men could see for themselves.

One response he sought, however, one reciprocity of relation between himself and his hearers; namely, sincerity, openness, and candor of mind. Any kind of falsity or pretense or guile called forth from him an answer that unearthed its ungenuineness and revealed the truth as it were in white light.

We note this especially in two ways.

1. Taking the Wise in their Own Craftiness [1]

Almost from the beginning of his ministry Jesus was beset by men, generally of the leading and cultured class, who were seeking not to learn the truth but to ensnare him in his words, and thereby get a pretext on legal or political grounds against him. They would come with smooth professions of respect and sincerity; would propound questions as if they had real doubts about them; and yet with sheer duplicity and hatred in their hearts. He saw the pretense and falsity of it all, yet he answered them according to what they pretended to be. They were posing as truth-seekers; he gave them straight truth. This he did by lifting their ideas out of the petty and sophisticated slough in which they were mired to a higher and more reasonable, which is to say a spiritual, plane. It was like setting the light of intuitive truth over against the ingenuities of rabbinical hair-splitting and logic.

Thus it came about that by his answers to these insincere questions, answers given as it were on the defensive, he brought out some of the profoundest truths of his teaching. Such, for instance, was his reply about the resurrection, wherein he removes the truth at one stroke from the fogs of speculation and conjecture to the clear ground of the

[1] The heading taken from Job v, 13; words of Eliphaz.

self-evident (Matt. xxii, 23–33). His reply about the tribute money (Matt. xxii, 15–22) not only silenced their duplicity but put every man into his reasonable relation both to God and to the state. Nor did he stop with the defensive,—with merely answering their questions. He turned the tables upon them, asking them questions in turn. Instances are his question about the significance of John's baptism (Matt. xxi, 23–27) and his question about their conception of the Christ (Matt. xxii, 41–45)—things which they could not answer without betraying their insincerity and their unspiritual ideals. They had invented dilemmas in which they tried in vain to entrap him; he, employing their own method, put them with ease into dilemmas from which they could not escape and remain the men they were. Yet his answers and his questions alike were not negative but eminently constructive. Their object was not controversy nor even self-defense, but vital truth. The result of these encounters it is important to note. In Matthew it is described, "And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (Matt. xxii, 46; cf. Mark xii, 34). To which Mark adds, "And the common people heard him gladly" (Mark xii, 37). The words so baffling to the insincere and sophisticated were clear and edifying to simple and candid minds.

It was inevitable, of course, that Jesus should come in contact with the leaders of thought and opinion. It was his mission, indeed, to teach not the common people only, or any one class, but all who would meet him as man to man, including the teachers and cultured ones of the nation. So all the leading classes, at the fitting occasions, had their encounters with him: the Scribes, who were the leaders in learning; the Pharisees, who were the orthodox authorities in religion; and the Sadducees, who were of the aristocratic and governing class, worldly and skeptical. Most of the opposition to him came from these classes; the secret plots

against him, also, were instigated by them; and his most sweeping denunciations were directed against these representatives of learning and religion. It is important therefore that we understand on what grounds there should have risen this mutual antagonism.

2. Unearthing Moral and Religious Shams

The prevailing mildness and graciousness of Jesus' manner makes the effect all the more impressive when he takes occasion to employ the literary weapon of invective. It gives us a sense of the tremendous reserve power which he could wield if he would, while at the same time our thought is concentrated on the thing that could so move him from his wonted orbit of gentleness. And we find the issue a very plain and simple one. It is the antipathy of the true to the false, of the sincere and genuine to crookedness and sham.

Jesus' most trenchant denunciations were directed against the Scribes and Pharisees. He seems to have taken a particular occasion to utter these; it was in Jerusalem in the last week of his ministry, just after his encounter with the leaders of the people. These denunciations are most fully reported in what are sometimes called the Seven Woes, in Matthew xxiii. The introduction to his discourse, however, shows that he had no controversy with Scribes and Pharisees as such, nor with what they taught as authoritative leaders of the people. They sat, as he said, in Moses' seat, and what they inculcated it was right to heed and do (Matt. xxiii, 2). Of the typical scribe, or man of letters, and what his capacities are if he has true insight, Jesus spoke in admiring terms (Matt. xiii, 52). He ate and associated freely with Pharisees who were sincere and candid with him (Luke vii, 36; xi, 37); and, as reported in the gospel of John, he imparted one of his profoundest doctrines to Nicodemus, an inquiring Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrim (John iii, 1–15). His whole issue with these two leading classes was on the ground of their too prevalent sham and inconsistency;

not because they were Scribes and Pharisees but because, or in so far as, they were hypocrites. The Greek word *hupokritēs*, in classical usage, means an actor, a stage-player. This meaning fits well with his denunciation of the Pharisees. As accredited and responsible teachers it was their duty to live as they taught. Instead of that they were posing, acting a false part, appearing to be what they were not. The series of woes pronounced upon them showed up the various ways in which they were making display of sanctity and righteousness while inwardly turning their professions to their own selfish purposes. For such insincere practices Jesus, the consistent witness to truth, could not but have the most uncompromising antipathy. On the other hand, he acquired the popular (or invidious) fame of being a friend of publicans and sinners (Matt. xi, 19; cf. Luke xix, 7), largely, it would seem, because there was no question of insincerity or pretense between them.

When once asked who was greatest in the kingdom of heaven he praised the truth and purity of childhood (Matt. xviii, 1–6); and in his beatitudes it was the pure, that is, the single of heart, who should see God (Matt. v, 8). The faith he sought was simply openness of heart and will to the truth of life as embodied in his words and personality. But with any form of crookedness or duplicity he had no patience or toleration.

IV

His Utterances in Divine Character. As we have seen,[1] for common hearers and ordinary occasions Jesus did not assert his personality as divine. He used the term "Son of Man" to designate himself, and even this for the most part indirectly, speaking of it in the third person as if of an ideal to be emulated and realized. At the same time he did not assume *not* to be divine or in any way to

[1] See above, pp. 535, 541 ff.

disguise the more than human personality that was his. He simply spoke in character. The divine beauty and power of his personality manifest themselves in the native dignity and greatness of his words. When he pronounced the forgiveness of sins, men recognized instinctively that he was exercising a divine prerogative, though he ascribed the authority to do so to the Son of Man (Mark ii, 7, 10). When he spoke habitually of his relations with his Father, the Jews were incensed against him because in their idea such intimacy as he professed to have with God could only be between equals (John v, 18). His whole teaching and intercourse are pitched, so to speak, in this divine key. One of the most striking examples of this may be felt in the passage wherein he bids men come to him for comfort and rest and take his yoke upon them (Matt. xi, 25–30). Another example occurs in his lament over Jerusalem in Matthew xxiii, 37. How truly divine is the whole presupposition of these utterances we can realize when we reflect how inappropriate, not to say impossible, they would be in any other man's mouth. Yet in him they sound perfectly congruous and fitting; his personality so fully bears them out. What would be insane assumption in an ordinary man is in him felt to be native and normal.

Note. On this characteristic of Jesus' teaching and personality William E. Channing says: "We feel that a new being, of a new order of mind, is taking a part in human affairs. There is a native tone of grandeur and authority in his teaching. . . . He speaks in a natural, spontaneous style of accomplishing the most arduous and important change in human affairs. This unlabored manner of expressing great thoughts is particularly worthy of attention. You never hear from Jesus that swelling, pompous, ostentatious language which almost necessarily springs from an attempt to sustain a character above our powers. He talks of his glories as one to whom they were familiar, and of his intimacy and oneness with God, as simply as a child speaks of his connection with his parents. He speaks of saving and judging the world, of drawing all men to himself, and of giving everlasting life, as we speak of the ordinary powers which we exert. He makes no set harangues about the grandeur of his office and character. His consciousness of it

gives a hue to his whole language, breaks out in indirect, undesigned expressions, showing that it was the deepest and most familiar of his convictions." [1]

With whom Most Overt

The examples given above (and others might be named) are taken from one of the synoptic gospels; and in general the assumptions of divinity in those gospels are indirect, not plainly assertive. This is quite consistent with Jesus' ordinary purpose to leave his divinity of nature to men's recognition and personal discovery. It is in the fourth gospel, however, that most of his utterances in divine character are to be found and that these are most overt. Many of them are so directly self-assertive that they give his words, as therein reported, an essentially different style from that of the other gospels. This has roused much question whether in this gospel we have an authentic report of his actual words or an invention, the result of later reflection and meditation. And doubtless a very individual style, the style of a peculiarly endowed writer, has been imparted to them. But to deny them, or some authentic nucleus of them, to Jesus is to go beyond the warrant. Jesus, as we know, was aware of his divine distinction; so, indeed, were the evil spirits (cf. Mark i, 24). For the proper human audience and occasion it is altogether probable that he would give open expression to the holy working-consciousness which so naturally shaped his thoughts and actuated his deeds of power.

To two classes of people Jesus' revelation of the divinity of his person was explicit, in terms of the Messiah or of the Son of God.

1. One class was of those who were susceptible to such a spiritual recognition of him, and who could receive his claims with sympathy, loyalty, humility. Among such, outside the circle of the disciples, were the woman of Samaria, to whom he explicitly announced himself as the Messiah

[1] Channing, Works (one-volume ed.), p. 305.

(John iv, 26); and the man born blind, to whom he revealed himself as the Son of God (John ix, 35–37). These, however, were casual instances, though we may be sure not so accidental as they would seem. Among the more intimate disciples also it is natural to suppose that some had more penetrative and intuitive minds to realize his divine nature than others; and of these "the disciple whom Jesus loved," to whom is attributed the authorship of the fourth gospel (John xxi, 24), was pre-eminent. The words of deeper and more mystic import, in which Jesus speaks openly in the divine character, would find a special lodgment in his mind, and after due ripening of meditation would be brought forth from memory and reproduced. This is what appears from the discourses of Jesus reported in the gospel of John.

To the Open-Minded and Humble

2. The other class was of those who, while by no means unsusceptible, were antagonistic to any claim to divinity on his part, or on the part of any man. Such were most of the Jewish leaders; whom the writer of the fourth gospel represents as bitterly unwilling to respond to the divine when they saw it (John v, 18; x, 33–38; xix, 7). To such, as responsible teachers of the people, Jesus would have a motive, if only to bear true witness, for declaring in clear and emphatic terms the deep significance of his personality. It was something essential for them to know, whether they would receive it or not (cf. Ezek. iii, 11).

To the Self-Blinded Leaders of Opinion

This is how the gospel of John represents him in his discourses given in Jerusalem; for it is especially these which this gospel, differing thus from the others, reports (see John v; vii–x; xii, 12–50). Here at the capital he came into collision with the leaders of opinion and sentiment, whose duty it was to know and propagate the truth. He meets them as they are ready to stone him for what they deem blasphemy (John x, 30, 31) and, as it were, hurls at

them in most positive terms his divine relations and nature. If this is different from his manner in the synoptic gospels, we must note also the difference of audience, occasion, and motive. He did not choose, amid such self-blinded opponents, to leave his divine personality uncertain or ambiguous. That belonged to his witness to the truth; the rest lay with them.

V

His Acts in Divine Character. The scientific temper of our age, with its disposition to reduce all things to the plane of ascertainable natural law, has made the question of the miracles of Jesus a very vexed and burning one. There is a widespread tendency, which even loyal Christians cannot well suppress, to adopt some explanation of them which will bring them to our natural unit of measure. This tendency takes mainly two forms: either to think that the miraculous element of Jesus' ministry came into the record as the result of childish wonder and credulity, which by the time the gospels were written had developed into an accepted tradition, or to limit his mighty works to such cases of suggestion and faith-healing as can be paralleled in modern times and to leave the rest to superstitious exaggeration.

Neither explanation does justice to the account. As to authenticity, the miracles are as well attested as any part of Jesus' ministry; are narrated in just as temperate and matter-of-fact style as the rest; and are so intimately interwoven with his teaching and ordinary acts that the two elements, natural and supernatural, must stand or fall together. If the record of the miracles must go, there is no valid reason for calling anything historic. A like thing may be said about attempts to limit their kind or range. They cannot be confined to cases in which *we* can trace the working of natural law, without losing their spiritual value. A larger and transcendent element escapes and baffles us; a divine dignity and depth which will not consent to be so limited.

As a Means of Self-Expression

We are not concerned here to call in question either the record or the reality of the miracles of Jesus. We take the record as it stands. Our approach to it is literary; and our consideration of the miracles deals with their essentially literary value. What do the miracles *say*, beyond what could be said otherwise?

In other words, we have to consider the miracles of Jesus as a means of self-expression. Given the character that he manifests himself to be, undeniably a character of majestic type; given the plane of being on which he moves, undeniably higher than that of ordinary affairs; are the miracles consistent and harmonious with these elements? They are, so to say, his means of personation, by which acts speak instead of words. Do they represent the person as he is? Has their supernatural character the verisimilitude which makes for self-evidencing value? It is a question not of literary transmission or historicity but of literary consistency and truth to nature. And to answer it we must deal fairly with the personality of the Being who works them. If he is divine as well as human his manner of self-expression, act as well as word, will correspond.

Considering the miracles in this light we may summarize the matter in two remarks.

1. The miracles of Jesus, while far transcending the ordinary range of human experience, contain nothing of the magical or monstrous, and they are never without a justifying and illuminating motive. They are in idea the polar opposite to the works of occult art or vulgar marvel which with raw and materialistic minds pass for miracle. And they always contain an idea worthy of their power. They are works of beneficence and mercy and sympathy; never wrought for display or self-glorification; always embodying the double truth, of divine love and good-will on the one side, of the possibilities that inhere in human faith on the other. They tell a truth which men need to know, and

which could not be told so well in any other way. In this respect they are, like Jesus' words, a kind of literary vehicle, an acted symbol, bringing the touch of his personality more intimately into the lives of men. They are, as it were, his life put into expression beyond the reach of words, a deeper utterance of grace where sermon and parable fail. We can imagine to some extent what service they have done mankind by thinking how much poorer the world would be without the greatest and summarizing miracle of all, his resurrection from the dead. In that the meaning of his ministry culminated.

NOTE. The contrast of Jesus' miracles as recorded in the gospels with the unmotived marvels of men's invention may be strikingly seen in the miracles of the Infancy of Christ which we find related in the so-called Apocryphal Gospels; see, for example, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. Of these an editor writes (Introd., p. xi): "The single effect of placing [these writings] alongside the narratives of the genuine Gospels must be, as Dr. Westcott has said, to impress the reader with the sense of 'complete contrast.' Time, place, propriety, even ordinary consistency, are recklessly disregarded."[1]

2. The miracles of Jesus, wrought without effort and with no trace of that uncertainty which attaches to a hazardous or doubtful experiment (cf. by contrast Mark ix, 17, 18), are evidently as natural to him as are ordinary acts to us. We have seen that while he did not assume to be more than man, neither did he assume not to be. He simply spoke and lived in character; and these miracles are the spontaneous acts of the divine, or rather the divine-human character. He does not dissociate them from the acts and powers of highest manhood. They are wrought, indeed, as showing the life-giving potencies of the Son of Man, true man, especially in the attitude of perfect faith. His own faith in the Father was so absolute that it had the effect of unquestioning certitude. Still, it was authentic faith, and he lived by faith just

[1] "New Testament Apocryphal Writings" (ed. Orr), pp. 21, 32.

as he would teach other men to live; and this faith created a fullness of personal force by virtue of which such works of mercy and love, great as the occasion demanded, were a natural way of living.

Tennyson describes the self-expression of Jesus as:

> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought.[1]

These perfect deeds he had no thought of monopolizing; they were, in his teaching, just such deeds as perfect man could do, with his nature fully at one with the divine. And the spirit of such deeds, which is really all their value, was thenceforth to be with believers a dynamic to even greater works than he had shown to men (see John xiv, 12).

NOTE. A tentative classification of his miracles, and the spiritual forces brought to expression therein, may here be given. They may be regarded under three heads:

1. Miracles wherein his personality acted directly, by antipathy, on unseen spiritual forces (casting out demons).

2. Miracles wherein his personality acted sympathetically on human disease and doom (healing and raising the dead).

3. Miracles wherein his personality acted as a masterful divine and creative power (Nature miracles).

None of these are less consistent with the presumable power of the Word made flesh than any other. They become more intelligible just in the proportion that Jesus himself does.

III. BEARING WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

We have noted[2] how reticent Jesus was about his claim to being Messiah and Son of God. He called himself rather Son of Man, teaching his followers in a quasi-theoretical way what such a Personage should be and do and holding the Messiah idea as it were in abeyance until they could get a just conception of it for themselves. We have seen[3] also

[1] See above, p. 527, note.

[2] See above, pp. 535, 541.

[3] See above, pp. 551 ff.

how he dealt with the idea of the kingdom of heaven; describing it in parables and figurative terms in order to wean men from their gross and external conceptions of it and make them accept it as a renovated inner life. All this manifests the supreme literary wisdom with which he met his generation's hopes and opinions and turned these in the way of sanity and tempered reason.

In this self-disclosure and teaching he had spent about three years of his ministry; until, as he knew, his time had nearly come. He had weathered the shallow popularity which his teaching and miracles first roused, and now the multitudes were in doubt about him (cf. Matt. xvi, 13, 14). He had trained a company of sincere disciples to familiarity with his principles of life: principles which, though now imperfectly comprehended, they would some day recall and understand. And now, as the end approached, all the simpler and humanitarian side of his Messiahship was in plain terms before the eyes of men. From the beginning of his ministry he had moved among the common people, accessible to all, living the sound, pure, just, and helpful life which fills out the idea and type of manhood.

Signs of a tragic outcome, however, were thickening. The bigoted and fanatical among the Scribes and Pharisees had dogged him from place to place, seeking to convict him of blasphemy and heresy. His life was plotted against in Judea (John vii, 1). For months he had been a virtual exile from Galilee, the domain of Herod Antipas, because Pharisees and Herodians were conspiring against him there[1] (Mark iii, 6; cf. viii, 15). We find him and his disciples at length in the dominions of Herod Philip at Cæsarea Philippi, in the extreme north of Palestine, whither he seems to have gone for seclusion. It was there that he predicted his death, and from there that he began his final progress through the land to Jerusalem.

[1] See Burkitt, "The Gospel History and its Transmission," pp. 95–97.

The history that follows may be regarded as the transition of his ministry to a new phase, the final and culminating one, wherein its deeper and ultimate meanings come to light.

I

The Great Confession and its Sequel. It was while he was far from his home province, in the only region where his life was safe, that Jesus received the first adequate recognition of his personality. Students of his career call this the Great Confession. Peter, the spokesman of the disciples, made it, in the answer he gave to Jesus' question, "But who say ye that I am?" (Matt. xvi, 15, 16; Mark viii, 29; Luke ix, 20). Others had made a variety of guesses who he was, all more or less idle because not made with insight; but the question had ceased to be acute, and curious and self-interested crowds had fallen away. The twelve disciples had remained; partly, it would seem, from simple loyalty, and partly because his teachings had become a spiritual necessity to their otherwise poorly furnished minds (cf. John vi, 66-69). But their intercourse with him had been an invaluable education, sounder and deeper than they were aware.

And now, in a strange country, they were alone with him, having his company all to themselves.

Peter's answer to Jesus' question gives voice to the human recognition which Jesus had all along sought to awaken. "Thou art the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God." This spontaneous confession marks the success of Jesus' aim thus far. So momentous does it signify to him that he attributes the ability to make it to a divinely given insight (Matt. xvi, 17). It is indeed a great height surmounted in Jesus' self-disclosure when those who have been most intimate with him, seeing his humility as well as his greatness, have risen to the sense, however dim, that the prophetic ideal of the ages is truly embodied in him. And this comes from the recognition of his intrinsic personality,

with no external glory or royalty to support his claims; for, so far from having the estate of a king, he is a hunted man, virtually in exile. To recognize him in this condition is to recognize him as he is.

Though in this confession the disciples had reached the point where they could heartily accept Jesus as King of men and Son of God, their ideas of what is involved in such royalty and sonship were vague and undeveloped. As yet they had seen, for the most part, merely his human side, the side which by earthly standards they could comprehend. But there was a depth and reach of personality yet unrevealed, a stage of the ministry that had waited, so to say, for this access of recognition on the part of men. As Jesus himself expressed it, he had yet a baptism to be baptized with (Luke xii, 50) before he could inaugurate that world order wherein his followers would, as John had predicted, be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire (cf. Matt. iii, 11).

How to Live Up to it

This discovered fact of his Messiahship, however, is not at this stage a thing to be proclaimed (Luke ix, 21), but to be thought out and understood. Accordingly, taking the disciples as it were into counsel with him on the question what this Christ, or, as he still says, the Son of Man, must be and do, he affirms with great solemnity that for him Messiahship means rejection and death, followed by resurrection. Such a doom for a true human life had already been foreseen by philosophers who had no idea of the uprise beyond it. "The wisdom of Plato had already seen that one perfectly just could not appear amongst the senseless and the wicked without provoking a murderous hatred." For him the hatred was to come from the accredited leaders of the nation; this was its anomaly. But Jesus' prediction was blind and repulsive teaching to the disciples, and was vehemently rebuked by Peter. His remonstrance with Jesus for presuming to predict such a fate, a remonstrance as vigorous

as his confession had been, was countered by a reproof on Jesus' part as emphatic as had been his previous commendation (Matt. xvi, 22, 23).

The Disciples' Part in the Issue

Following his solemn announcement of his coming suffering and death, Jesus as solemnly enunciates the principle that for every disciple of his (in which number he includes not the twelve only but all who ever believe in him, Mark viii, 34) the following of his way means self-denial and cross-bearing. "If any one," he says, "would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke ix, 23). On a later occasion, as great multitudes followed him, he spoke still more emphatically, "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple," — accompanying the statement by the "hard saying" about hating all one's relatives for his sake (Luke xiv, 25–27). To the earlier statement he adds the enigmatical saying, "For whosoever would save his life will lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same will save it" (Luke ix, 24). Among the paradoxes and startling half-truths with which his teaching abounds,[1] this was the most spiritually penetrative and the hardest to make men understand. We may call it the distinctive Christian principle, which is destined in the end to prevail. What he meant has become a commonplace of the Christian consciousness and spirit. However imperfectly men carry it out, or however the world scorns the practical application of it, no theme of literature and life is so honored to-day as self-sacrifice and the heroism of service. But such an ideal, though it touched the very heart of his reign, needed time and a new spirit of life for realization; and Jesus reassuringly added that the kingdom of heaven would come with power; that there were men standing there who would see it before they died (Matt. xvi, 28; Mark ix, 1; Luke ix, 27).

[1] See above, p. 546 f.

Starting to Carry it Out

At this point in his ministry we note a change in the substance and tone of his teaching. He left the region of Cæsarea Philippi a few days (or perhaps weeks)[1] after the Great Confession; and in the course of a somewhat leisurely and unobtrusive journey through Palestine from north to south (cf. for Galilee, Mark ix, 30), a sort of farewell journey with Jerusalem as his objective, he took occasion to impress on his disciples that this, his last journey, meant going to death and resurrection (Luke ix, 51; ix, 44; Mark ix, 30–32; x, 32–34). It was their hardest lesson; and for the time they were almost deaf to it, though the majesty of his mien, as thus he strode so resolutely toward his doom, amazed them. To the idea of the coming kingdom, however, they were quite keenly awake, and there was rivalry among them as to who should be greatest therein. James and John, indeed, who are thought to have been cousins of Jesus, preferred a definite request for high official appointment (Mark x, 35–37); but his response to their request, "Can ye drink of the cup which I drink? or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (Mark x, 38), elicits their mistaken conception and emphasizes anew the austere and soul-trying ordeal that awaits them. He is minded to foster no false hopes. Nor does he command them to follow him. He gives them the opportunity rather, holding before them the risks and the sacrifices; his appeal is always to men's choice and free will. It is with a kind of yearning wistfulness that he asks if they can share his cup and his baptism with him, submitting themselves thereby to lives of service (Mark x, 42–45). But from this time onward the severity and solemnity of the situation deepens, for he is preparing them for the deep things of the manhood life.

[1] We have to reckon for the Transfiguration (see next section), which occurred six or eight days after (Luke ix, 28; Mark ix, 2); succeeding that, however, the start southward is indefinite.

II

Reckoning on Departure. The last six months of Jesus' ministry was a deliberate planning and preparation for the end. To designate this ending St. Luke, in his account of the Transfiguration, uses a peculiar word: he calls it decease or departure (Greek *tēn exodon*, "the exodus, the going out," Luke ix, 31); an idea which included not only death but rising again and, to crown all, ascension — entrance upon a higher stage and table-land of being, from which divine position his ministry could be continued on a world scale and be victorious. That this was the idea in Jesus' mind is evident from what he said about being lifted up, both at the beginning and the end of his ministry. To a Pharisee, during his first visit to Jerusalem, he said the Son of Man must be lifted up, and he illustrated it by reference to Moses and the serpent in the wilderness (John iii, 14; cf. Num. xxi, 8, 9). To certain Greeks who later inquired after him in Jerusalem, his remark, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John xii, 32), meant crucifixion, but it meant a great deal more. It meant a death which was also a germination, like that of a grain of wheat buried in the ground; this is the image he used to illustrate it (John xii, 24). All this, it will be noted, he took upon himself not as assuming the divine but as Son of Man, working out the true glory of manhood.

The Great Refusal and Resolve

A week after Peter had made his confession and Jesus had told the disciples what it involved and presaged, occurred one of the most mysterious events of his ministry. As with Peter, James, and John, his three most intimate companions, he was in prayer on a high mountain, — probably Mount Hermon, near Cæsarea Philippi, — suddenly, with a super-earthly light apparently from within his person, his face and figure so shone that his very garments were dazzling white. Two men, also glorified, who

were identified as Moses and Elijah, appeared and talked with him. This strange episode is narrated by all three of the synoptists (Matt. xvii, 1–8; Mark ix, 2–8; Luke ix, 28–36); and its essentials are recalled in a later epistle attributed to one of the spectators (2 Peter i, 16–18). St. Luke alone reports the subject of their conversation. They spoke, he says, of his decease, his exodus, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

These two men, it will be remembered, were the greatest personages of Old Testament history: the men in whom, respectively, the essential spirit of law and of prophecy were embodied. From Moses had been preserved a prediction of a prophet to come after him like himself, to whom men should hearken (Deut. xviii, 15; cf. Acts iii, 22; vii, 37); and Elijah, as the evangelists recall, was to be the herald of the Christ (Mal. iv, 5; cf. Matt. xi, 14; Mark ix, 11–13; Luke i, 17). And now these three, so intimately associated in prophecy and fulfillment, were together, discussing a new theme. Further, the other-world personages were two of the three men (the other was the patriarch Enoch, Gen. v, 24) who are represented to have been spared the universal fate of death, or, in the case of Moses, to have had an exceptional departure from earth (Deut. xxxiv, 5, 6; 2 Kings ii, 1–11), — a distinction seemingly due to their exceptional identification with God's work and will. If their release from mortality was a reward of such merit, then Jesus, whose meat, as he said, was to do the Father's will (cf. John iv, 34), would certainly seem to have earned it, nay, to be even more truly than they worthy of exemption from death. And that he was all ready for such translation, the other-world splendor of his form and his intimacy with the great immortals seem to indicate. Translation to heaven, the ascension by which at the end he actually did depart (Acts i, 9–11), was his if he would take it; he could be spared the preliminary shame and suffering and death and resurrection.

Here then occurs what we have called the great refusal and resolve. He chose to renounce this exceptional result of a sinless life; chose to submit to the universal human lot, the doom which from earliest times had been deemed the wages and penalty of sin (cf. Gen. ii, 17; Rom. vi, 16, 23). His motive in this his whole consistent career had revealed. As Son of Man he was resolved to submit to all to which man is subject, claiming no favors or exemption. A death so chosen, when he might have been spared it, was truly unique. It was doubtless a new thing to Moses and Elijah themselves; and one of the spectators of this transfiguration describes the sacrifice as something that prophets had speculated on and that angels had desired to look into (1 Pet. i, 10–12).

With this refusal and resolve made, the splendor faded. A cloud enveloped the company, and from it there came a voice, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; hear ye him" (Luke ix, 35). As the voice ceased the disciples saw only Jesus alone. He had made the resolve, it would seem, of his own will without reference to the Father's; but the immediate approval from heaven evinced that his will and the Father's were entirely at one. His sense of perfect unity with the Father yet perfect freedom of choice and action on his own part he asserted later in Jerusalem. "Therefore doth the Father love me," he said, "because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x, 17, 18).

In this episode at Mount Hermon Jesus had virtually laid down his life. There remained only the deepening details of making his resolve an actuality. But the disciples, naturally enough, could not understand it in this its initial stage. They were bidden keep silent about it until the Son of Man was risen (Matt. xvii, 9). It was the eventual

taking of his life again, the uprise from this earthly stage of being to a higher, that made its motive and purpose clear.

The Miracle Planned and Wrought in Bethany

For such a masterful departure from earth, with its avails for humanity, it is natural to suppose such planning and preparation would be made as would preserve and perpetuate its meaning for all time and for all planes of spiritual insight. If resurrection is an available fact, it is of supreme importance that men should know its source, its power, its conditions. Such seems to have been the purpose that Jesus had in mind in his miracle of the raising of Lazarus, as narrated in John xi; which event we anticipate a little in time in order to note its relation to Jesus' reckoning on departure.

He had made one of the occasional visits to Jerusalem which the fourth gospel reports (John x, 22–24), and while there had spoken so plainly in divine character[1] that the Jews were on the point of stoning him for blasphemy (John x, 31). He escaped their hands, however, and withdrew to Bethany across the Jordan (John x, 40; cf. i, 28), where for some time he taught and won believers. While there word was sent him from Bethany near Jerusalem that his friend Lazarus of that village was sick. The household to which Lazarus belonged consisted of three, himself and his two sisters Martha and Mary; and Jesus was intimate there, it being probably his home in his visits to Judea (see Luke x, 38–42). All were sincere believers of his teaching, and he loved them (John xi, 5). It was the sisters, Martha and Mary, who sent him word of their brother's illness.

On receiving the word, however, instead of going at once to his friend's bedside, he remained two whole days where he was, making in the meantime such explanations as indicate that he was planning not a cure of illness but a restoration from the grave. The sickness, he said, was not unto death but for the glory of God and the glorification of the

[1] See above, pp. 561 f.

Son of God (John xi, 4). Then, telling his disciples plainly that Lazarus was dead, he started for Judea, and on arriving in Bethany found that Lazarus had been four days buried. A large company of friends of the family (for they were connected with leading families in Jerusalem) followed him as he went to the tomb; and before calling Lazarus forth to life he uttered a public thanksgiving that he had already been heard by the Father (John xi, 41–42). He had already assured Martha too of the power of risen life that resided inherently in him: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John xi, 25; cf. viii, 51). The tremendous miracle that he now wrought was just the proof, or, as the gospel of John would say, the sign, of this truth. It was one of the greatest of those "acts in divine character"[1] which told truths of supreme importance to men and yet not expressible otherwise; truths which, left untold, would leave the race of men infinitely poorer.

Sequel of the Act and the Plan

The immediate effect of this notable miracle was to precipitate the action of the leaders and chief priests, who held a council and, on the advice of Caiaphas the High Priest, decreed Jesus' death (John xi, 47–53). Until the final passover season, therefore, when his time was come to lay down his life, he tarried with the disciples in a place near the wilderness called Ephraim (John xi, 54). To the power of the life that was in him, therefore (cf. John i, 4), he had by this miracle borne witness, not before a few intimate disciples merely but before the leading classes and in a public way. As a consequence the common people were ready to acknowledge his Messiahship by popular acclaim (John xii, 12–15); but the leaders, counseled by the High Priest, fearing for the political security of their nation, decided that he must die (John xi, 47–52).

[1] See above, pp. 562 f.

In reckoning on departure, however, Jesus, as we have seen, had in mind not only death but resurrection; and this miracle at Bethany seems to have been planned in order to make resurrection a fact intelligible and available. His own uprise from death would show, indeed, the personal victory of his life over the bondage of death; but it was not for himself that he lived his life; it was to be a light and power for men. By calling Lazarus back from the grave, to live henceforth in the memory and influence of that experience, he furnished a concrete object lesson of renewed life which should remain when he himself had gone to the Father (cf. John xiv, 7). A man between whom and him was the tie of a reciprocal love would thus be a living witness to the power of life and the abolition of death (cf. 2 Tim. i, 10) inherent in such relation. It was in this way, as he said, that the Son of God and the Father himself would be glorified (John xi, 4, 40).

NOTE. On a careful study of data one is inclined to attribute a still broader plan in this miracle — a plan not only that he as Son of God should be glorified but that an adequate record of his divine claim should be made. This plan is concerned with the identification of the author of the fourth gospel, which we know is anonymous except as ascribed to "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John xxi, 24).

If Lazarus, whom Jesus is repeatedly said to have loved, was the same as the disciple whom Jesus loved, we cannot well miss the suggestion that comes to light in this deliberately planned miracle: a suggestion of Jesus' far-seeing purpose similar to that in pursuance of which he trained the twelve to become apostles or representatives (cf. Luke vi, 13), and came later from his risen realm to make Saul of Tarsus a "chosen vessel" bearing the Christ-values to the Gentile world (Acts ix, 15). In other words, though he himself wrote nothing, yet this event seems to show that he planned to have the deepest and highest truths of his ministry adequately written. To present these truths in their inwardness a specially susceptible mind was necessary; and the disciple whom Jesus loved evinces throughout the gospel the possession of such a mind.[1]

[1] See below, pp. 641–644.

III

Rounding Off the Earthly Ministry. From the account of the miracle at Bethany, considered here as part of his preparation for departure, we return now to a somewhat earlier period of Jesus' career, the period beginning after the Transfiguration.

St. Luke's words, "And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke ix, 51), give a just indication of the solemn and deliberate spirit in which Jesus ordered the last few months of his earthly ministry. By his frequent mention of the fact that Jesus was approaching the city of his martyrdom (Luke xvii, 11; xviii, 31; xix, 11, 28), Luke shows his sense of the momentousness of the journey, which he narrates much more fully than do the other evangelists. It was a kind of farewell tour, beginning near Mount Hermon in the extreme north and pursued in a leisurely but wisely planned progress through the numerous districts of Galilee, Samaria, Perea, and Judea, where his earlier ministry had been or where he desired to effect lodgment of his truth before he was taken away. By this time he had the apostles quite well in training to assist him in his work of preaching and healing (Luke ix, 1, 2); and an additional seventy were appointed to go forward and prepare for his entrance into the various cities and places (Luke x, 1). This work of his was done in the feeling that time was short and that every word and deed must count for the most possible. "I have a baptism to be baptized with," he said, "and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" (Luke xii, 50). This remark expresses his conviction that even his beneficent work of help and healing, to which he was ordained and anointed,[1] must needs represent his mission in a cramped and limited way, until the

[1] See above, p. 540.

supreme meaning is put to his life and his ministry reaches its sacrificial stage.

His Later Teaching

His later teaching, accordingly, whether addressed to the disciples, to the multitudes, or to the upper classes, has a kind of definitive note, as if it were the message that he would leave with them as most significant and final. To the disciples, who, quite ignoring his predictions of suffering and death, clung to the notion of a worldly kingdom, he taught lessons of humility and mutual service (for example, Matt. xviii) and of that readiness for the kingdom of heaven which consists in the wise employment of talents (Matt. xxv, 14–30), faithful and merciful stewardship (Matt. xxiv, 45–51), and the keeping of lamps filled and burning (Matt. xxv, 1–13). To the general hearers he gave some of his tenderest and most searching parables, as if he would use every means to enlighten them. Such were the parables of the Lost Son (Luke xv, 11–32); of the Good Samaritan (Luke x, 29–37); of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi, 19–31); and of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke xviii, 9–13). Some of his later parables, like the story of the Unjust Judge (Luke xviii, 1–8), of the Unfaithful Steward (Luke xvi, 1–8), and of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx, 1–16), are paradoxical in the audacity of their implications, yet all in the interest of a more robust faith. It is in these later utterances, too, that he denounces the besetting falseness and hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees;[1] and to these leaders of the nation he gives the parable of the Rejection of the King's Son (Luke xx, 9–18). All this is like setting his messages, as it were, in final order, as that on which believers and unbelievers alike could permanently depend. The crown and culmination of these utterances, perhaps, is the tremendous picture he draws of the judgment that the Son of Man will pronounce at the end on all nations (Matt. xxv, 31–46). It portrays in simple terms the reversal

[1] See above, pp. 554 f.

of human judgment which comes with the spirit of Christianity and makes it, in its gentle yet penetrative way, the most revolutionary power in the world.

As Jesus enters upon the final week, which he spends in Jerusalem, Bethany, and the Mount of Olives, the intensity of his mood increases; his words become more prophetic, more vehement, and more like those of a judge pronouncing doom. Availing himself of a symbolic prediction in Zechariah (see Zech. ix, 9), — for both in relation to law and to prophecy he comes to fulfill, — he makes a dramatic entry into Jerusalem, riding upon an ass and with shouting multitudes accompanying (Matt. xxi, 1–11; Mark xi, 1–11; Luke xix, 28–40). As, coming over the crest of the hill from Bethany, he reaches the point on the Mount of Olives where the city comes into magnificent view, he pauses to weep over it and to prophesy its destruction, — one of his most moving utterances in divine character (Luke xix, 41–44). After some days of teaching and controversy in the Temple, as he has left it for the last time and is sitting on the hillside over against it, he gives almost as if casually his most notable prophetic discourse to his disciples.[1] In response to their expressed admiration of its splendor and magnificence, he prophesies that the days are coming when not one stone of the Temple will be left upon another. This leads to predictions of great hardships and trials, of great opportunities also for wisdom and faith and steadfastness, of the end of the age with its apocalyptic signs, and of the eventual coming of the Son of Man to those who, like the fig tree when summer approaches, have put forth their wealth of faith and fruitfulness to meet him (Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi, 5–36). It is Jesus' own contribution to apocalyptic literature; in which images dictated by prophetic fantasy are replaced by spiritual values that all may realize and feel.

[1] See "The Presage in Jesus' Words," pp. 660 ff., below.

The story of the close of Jesus' ministry is but the detailed account of his deliberate laying down of his life, his voluntary committal of himself to the hands of men for their acceptance or rejection, until, regardless of its immediate result of apparent failure, his final word from the cross was, "It is finished" (John xix, 30). It does not belong to the scope of our treatment to recount the last days of Jesus on earth. The story of them is told, with variations of order, fullness, and incident, but with little if any real discrepancy, by all four Evangelists.

It is Finished

What suits our purpose is rather to note that although he let men do their will upon him (cf. Matt. xvii, 12), without resistance or evasion on his part (cf. Matt. xxvi, 53; Luke xxii, 53), it all came about in consistent pursuance of the ideal that he had formed from the beginning: the ideal of what is due to the integrity and perfecting of the true manhood. Nothing short of the life he lived and the death he died — with all its accompaniment of divine power and wisdom and grace — could fully express its worth and potency.

This ministry of Jesus came too in what an apostle has called "the fullness of the time" (Gal. iv, 4), when, as it were, the stage of human nature was set and the properties ready. Jesus, with the sense of this age-preparation upon him, was acting consciously as the Protagonist in a great world transaction, — as it were, a mighty dramatic action, in which the theme, wrought out by actual fullness of life, was the achievement of manhood in perfect loyalty to its divine parentage and powers. This we may regard as the large literary aspect of his life among men. To live such a life was to be, whether recognized or not, not only man but the divinely anointed King of men. The best expression of this idea, perhaps, is Jesus' definition of his life's meaning and aim, as given to the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate, when he stood before that ruler a prisoner and self-confessed king:

"Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John xviii, 37). The word "bear witness," *martureo*, is the word from which comes our word "martyr,"—a term which his death and the death of many who lived in his faith have made forever sacred. His witness to the highest truth and beauty of manhood went on heroically and consistently until its end was martyrdom.

Yet Only Just Begun

For three days after his crucifixion the end seemed to all like ruin and failure. It was a time of suspense and doubt, as if the promise of manhood and eternal life were falsified. Then an event occurred which, however we seek to make it realistic, changed the mood of the disciples from despair to bewildered awe and wonder, and later to a permanence of courage and beneficence and joy such as they had never experienced before. They went forth announcing to the world that he could not be holden of death (Acts ii, 24), but that in his continued life the power of death itself was conquered. The event of his life which was the first to be preached (Acts ii, 32) and the earliest to be recorded in writing (1 Cor. xv, 3–8) was his resurrection from the dead.

If Jesus' death on the cross was the sign that one stage of his active ministry was finished, the resurrection three days later was the signal of a new beginning. Henceforth the same ministry was to be perpetuated by the activities of men, living and working in the spirit of the Christ. St. Luke, going on from his gospel to write a continuation of history, is accurate in calling the former treatise as "concerning all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach" (Acts i, 1). The beginning implies continuation; and in that continuation not only will new and greater works be done but new discoveries made in the facts and values of that life which has proved itself the light of men.

CHAPTER X

THE LITERATURE OF FACT

[A.D. 30 onward]

For Fact, well-trusted, reasons and persuades,
Is gnomic, cutting, or ironical,
Draws tears, or is a tocsin to arouse, —
Can hold all figures of the orator
In one plain sentence; has her pauses too —
Eloquent silence at the chasm abrupt
Where knowledge ceases. — GEORGE ELIOT

AFTER the ascension of Jesus (Acts i), which left the disciples with a new courage and hope, and after the wonderful illumination which they experienced at Pentecost (Acts ii), the little Christian community, still identified with Judaism and its associations, had no thought of making a literature, or even of needing any books except those of the Old Testament. Their first interests were active and practical. They were concerned to make known the momentous new truth that had been revealed to them and to avail themselves of its power and promise. For centuries their nation had subsisted largely on a literature of prophetic strain; had been looking for an ideal king and a golden age. And now that in the conviction of these disciples, henceforth called apostles, the era of fulfillment was come, the practical problem was not to write or philosophize about it but to make it available to the largest extent possible and to naturalize its results in the world.

In course of time, however, a literature must in the nature of things rise out of this Christian faith and activity. The

primal materials for such a literature, in the form of oral address and teaching, were forthcoming at once. It was what the apostles went about proclaiming, in order to induce men to believe what they had seen and experienced. This oral utterance, to begin with, based itself on simple concrete fact. It was concerned with reporting what had actually taken place — events so unique and far-reaching that the witnesses of them could not keep silent. Peter's answer to the rulers who would forbid him gives the keynote of their initial motive: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts iv, 19, 20). Such reporting of events and their meaning was the beginning of a literature.

The tone of this literature is not philosophical nor expository. It is not conceived in the feeling of poetry or eloquence. It is simple announcement of fact and fulfillment. The general name it has received contains just this implication. It is called *euaggelion* (literally, "good news"), from which comes the Saxon translation "gospel" (that is, "good spell" or "news"), a term adopted from the suggestion of the Second Isaiah, which Jesus used as a description of his own mission (Isa. xl, 9; lxi, 1; Luke iv, 18). "Good news," "good tidings," and "gospel" are synonymous terms. The men in the early church who, in distinction from apostles and prophets, had this duty of announcement specifically in charge were called Evangelists (Eph. iv, 11; Acts xxi, 8).

I. The Apostles and their Initial Message

"As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John xx, 21), — in these simple words Christ commissioned his disciples after he was risen from the dead. Their work was to be, as nearly as they could do it, a reproduction, in spirit and kind, of his: a work of disseminating the truth of

life as he had taught them to apprehend it. They immediately felt the pressure of this responsibility. From being disciples (that is, "learners"), which was all they could be so long as he was with them, they assumed the function to which from the beginning he had destined them, and the name which by anticipation he had given them (Luke vi, 13). Henceforth they were apostles, that is, men "sent forth," namely, as representatives or ambassadors, with authority to represent to the world One who had proved himself Messiah, King of men.

The Apostolic College

Their first step after the ascension of Christ was to make good their original number, twelve, which had been broken into by the defection of Judas. This they did by choosing to fill his place a man named Matthias, taking care that he should be duly qualified for the responsible distinction. The simple qualification that they sought is worthy of note. It was that he should be one of the men "that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us. Of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts i, 21, 22). They made the choice not wholly in reliance on their own wisdom, but, selecting two candidates, cast lots between them, leaving the decision by prayer to their ascended Lord (Acts i, 23–26).

This primitive organization — a college of twelve apostles — appears to have been merely provisional, having in view the object of proclaiming facts with which they had become familiar: the facts of a life and death which had had such a wonderful outcome of resurrection. The number twelve was maintained partly because it was the Lord's chosen number, but also — as they were Jews — with reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, now scattered abroad through the world (cf. Matt. xix, 28; James i, 1). Of the subsequent history of most of these twelve little or nothing is known. Only

Peter and John are mentioned for their activity in Jerusalem, and James the brother of John for his martyrdom, which occurred under Herod Agrippa (Acts xii, 2). These three were just the ones of the twelve who had been most intimate with Jesus, and to their care was left the initiation of the gospel announcement.

As time went on, however, and the needs of manning their mission increased, the apostolic company seems to have been open to new additions. James the brother of Jesus, who had not been a disciple during the Lord's lifetime, became the head of the Jerusalem church, and is spoken of as an apostle (Gal. i, 19); and Paul, a converted Pharisee, became the most active and able of the apostles. The later requisite for apostleship seems to have been that the man should have seen the risen Lord (cf. 1 Cor. ix, 1), and this was true both of James and Paul (for James, see 1 Cor. xv, 7). It is not unlikely, indeed, that the company of more than five hundred (1 Cor. xv, 6) who saw him acquired a distinction akin to apostolic because they could vouch for the fact that he had risen.

I

Their Fitting Kind of Work. The apostles who after their Lord's departure were charged with the first promulgation of the truth were men in the ordinary walks of life, rather than aristocrats or scholars; in touch, therefore, with the mind and needs of common people, and thus in genuine sympathy with all, from the humblest up. For the work that first needed doing — telling a straight story of facts — such men were the best instruments. On the one hand, they had not become sophisticated with the refinements or prejudices of academic learning. They had no inherited system of theology or ecclesiastical organization to maintain. On the other hand, they had been intimate companions of Jesus, learning his way from the beginning; and this in itself was

a liberal education. As for book learning, they had, like all earnest-minded Jews, a sound working knowledge of the Old Testament, such as their life-long conversance with synagogue instruction would impart; which knowledge had of course been greatly enriched and clarified by their intercourse with the great Teacher.

NOTES. 1. *The Apostles' Conversance with Scripture.* Peter's intimate knowledge of Scripture may be seen from the fact that in his first discourse, in which he announces to the disciples the need of a new election to the apostolate (Acts i, 20), he quotes from Psa. lxix and cix; and in his great Pentecost discourse (Acts ii, 14–36) he quotes from Joel ii, 28 ff.; from Psa. xvi, 8 ff.; and from Psa. cx, 1. Peter and John in their thanksgiving (Acts iv, 25, 26) quote two verses of Psa. ii. Peter in his second great discourse (Acts iii, 12–26) quotes several passages from Genesis and Deuteronomy. Stephen's great discourse (Acts vii) is a masterly résumé of Hebrew history from Abraham to Solomon, with extended quotations from Amos v and Isa. lxvi (Acts vii, 42, 43, 49, 50).

2. *Bearing on Accuracy of Factual Report.* As to the fitness of these primitive apostles for reporting the words of Jesus, as these are later given in the gospels, A. C. Benson ("From a College Window," p. 346) says: "The words and sayings of Christ emerge from the narrative, though in places it seems as though they had been imperfectly apprehended, as containing and expressing thoughts quite outside the range of the minds that recorded them; and thus possess an authenticity which is confirmed and proved by the immature mental grasp of those who compiled the records, in a way in which it could not have been proved if the compilers had been obviously men of mental acuteness and far-reaching philosophical grasp."

Accordingly, both their native endowments and their acquired ability were at once perceived by the educated class who saw their efficiency. The same leaders who a few months before had inquired about Jesus, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John vii, 15) are the ones of whom it is now said, "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned (*agrammatoi*) and ignorant (*idiotai*) men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had

been with Jesus" (Acts iv, 13). The source of their remarkable assurance and power was evident. They were fitted in their degree, as the Master had been before them, to speak with authority and not as the scribes (cf. Matt. vii, 29).

Their Sense of Scope and Limits

It will be noted, however, that they did not attempt to do anything for which their birth and training had not fitted them. They were plain men of the people, — Galileans, who had lived remote from centers of learning, but in contact with everyday affairs. They did not set up as professional teachers or philosophers; did not pose as prophets or sages; did not attempt to demolish the prevailing moral and religious order of their day. They felt themselves rather in charge of a tremendous fact, of which their own experience was cognizant: fact which a plain man could tell as well as a learned one; fact which could not remain inert, but opened out into vital meanings, fulfilling and clarifying the great hopes which their nation had cherished. The benefits of this fact they felt themselves authorized and obligated, as apostles of a living Lord and King, to make available to all who would accept it.

Such a work produced its own fitting style of utterance. Not argument, not exposition, not elaborate description and narration. The tone and effect of their initial message was essentially preaching; that is, announcement, proclamation, of what they had seen and heard, without theory, or elaboration, or speculation. In later years it was thus put by an Evangelist whose sense of it was peculiarly penetrative: "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life, . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us" (1 John i, 1, 3). They did not know the full secret of it at first; but they could state a visible and audible fact. For such a work men of this sterling class, and with their unique preparation of experience, were

eminently qualified. Their lack of academic refinements and prepossessions was, indeed, an advantage. There was so much less to warp or obscure their vision, so much less blur on the mirror of their consciousness.

II

Four Phases of the First Apostolic Message. The main substance of these plain men's preaching may be given in four statements, which to them had the force of simple matter of fact.

1. It begins with the culminating event of Jesus' earthly life: his resurrection from the dead. Their Master, who had so cruelly suffered death, was alive again; they had seen him and had received his commission. This is proclaimed as an actual and literal occurrence, a proved fact of human life. Their sense of its importance is seen in their choosing to repair their number one who, like them, could serve as a witness of his resurrection (Acts i, 22). They could vouch for the truth that, as Peter expressed it, it was not possible that Jesus should be holden of death (Acts ii, 24). This is the central announcement in all their preaching, — this, rather than the details of his works and words before resurrection. It was an event full of cheer and hope to those who had cast in their lot with him in earthly life — an event full of untold meaning for men.

Along with this announcement, which naturally would bring dismay on those who had mistakenly put him to death, the apostles assured their nation that this error was not laid up against them (Acts iii, 17–20), but that all might avail themselves of his pardon and favor. Thus, to begin with, the apostles regarded themselves as witnesses to an event which in every sense and to every man was good news, — an evangel, a gospel.

2. Nor was it merely of a past event that the apostles were witnesses and interpreters. They were eager also to

explain a present power on men whose effects all could see. At the Pentecost season, some ten days after their Master's ascension, while the company of the apostles were together in Jerusalem, suddenly a strange new enthusiasm came upon them which quickened their faculties and gave them an insight and intensity of life like that of the ancient prophets (Acts ii, 1–4). This illumination and power, which they recognized as the presence of the Holy Spirit, they identified also as the spirit of Christ bestowed upon them in pursuance of his promise (Acts ii, 33; cf. i, 8); also as the fulfillment of a prediction made long before by the prophet Joel (Acts ii, 17–21). All this was to them the plain evidence of their Master's continued power and work on earth. He was still conducting his ministry, but on a larger scale and with more inward and vital effects.

3. All these surprising things — the return from death and the uprise of their Master, the access of illumination in them — opened their minds to what they had inherited from the past. These things were the fulfillment of prophecies that had long been familiar to them but had not been duly heeded. It had been difficult for Jesus while with them to convince them that he must die. Now it was perfectly plain to them that not only he but the prophetic literature had foreseen death and resurrection as essential elements in the career of the Messiah (see Acts ii, 23; iii, 18; cf. Luke xxiv, 26). Thus the apostles became practical interpreters, or rather identifiers, of prophecy, notably of things which till then had been neglected or disbelieved; maintaining that the Messiah as foretold must pass through an experience essentially the same as the actual experience of Jesus of Nazareth. This of course was a necessary step in the work of getting Jesus accepted as Messiah by his own people. It identified him with men's already available fund of facts and ideas; joined the Old Testament, so to say, with the nucleus and subject matter of the New.

4. Not only had the apostles the conviction that Jesus had fulfilled all the conditions of prophecy, — they had also the assurance of a new future not yet fulfilled or shaped. This assurance took the form of a firm belief that their Lord (for so they now called him), after a temporary sojourn in the heavens, would return to earth in person, and judge the world, and organize his kingdom as a visible realm (cf. Acts i, 11; iii, 21). It seems, indeed, to have been their idea, perhaps for many years, that he had not yet actually assumed his Messiahship but that he would do so on his return to earth; and in the early years of the church the title by which he was known was not Messiah or Christ but simply Lord (see Rom. x, 9; 1 Cor. xii, 3; cf. John xiii, 13). While they were awaiting his return, which they deemed was due within that generation (cf. Matt. xxiv, 33, 34), they were to submit to his lordship, acting as his representatives and preparing men to receive him worthily. He himself had predicted that he would sometime return in visible glory (cf. Matt. xxvi, 64); of that they were sure. But he had warned them against setting the time, which, indeed, the Master himself did not know (Acts i, 7; Matt. xxiv, 36), and which was not arbitrary with God but conditioned on the history of man.

This prophecy of Christ's coming, or, as it was called, his *parousia*, or presence, was, like all prophecies, foreshortened, and men could not realize except by actual experience the immense growth and enlargement in manhood that must intervene. It was really the prophecy of an evolution still in progress and still becoming more lucid and reasonable, which, however, to be received at all, must at first be apprehended in a concrete form corresponding to the concrete events they had seen (cf. Acts i, 11). Meanwhile, the apostles' present duty was clear. They, and all whom they could induce to believe with them, had but to wait in hope, and cultivate the spirit of Christ, and be ready (cf. 1 Thess. v, 1–11).

Thus in these four main topics of their new way of life the primitive Christian community, taught by apostles, were put in possession of a working message which simple and plain men could handle. It was based not on theories nor on scholarship, but on such fact as all could apprehend and on such deductions from fact as were naturally suggested by the literature in which all were schooled. And out of it, as time went on, grew the substance of the gospel story, as we read it especially in the first three, the so-called synoptic, gospels.

II. The Growth of the Synoptic Gospels

The gospel — that is, a fund of fact announced and interpreted as good news — is, as it must needs be, the rock-bed of all New Testament literature. No amount of religious philosophy or speculation can dispense with that. The facts of Christ's life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, must be made known to the world by those who personally observed them, in order to gain the world's belief and allegiance. The meaning of those facts can be left to men's growing intelligence and power to assimilate; just as growth can be awaited from the planting and germination of a seed.

Note. *How the Apostles viewed it.* The apostles insist on the distinction between fact and theory and on the literary vehicle proper to each. "The foolishness of preaching," that is, of depending on the announcement and demonstration of fact, St. Paul ironically calls the method he has found effectual for his purpose, and contrasts it, on the one hand, with doing miraculous things and, on the other, with wisdom, or philosophy, that is, the reasonings and speculations of men. This recognizes that the basis of his message was not logic but matter-of-fact, or, as he puts it, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (see 1 Cor. i, 18–25). — In a reminiscence of the most astonishing event of Jesus' life, namely, his transfiguration, St. Peter, in the consciousness that truth is stranger than fiction, says, "We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and presence (*parousian*) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i, 16).

I

The Germinating Time. But the mere statement of facts gives only information, not literature; does not even tell the truth, but only furnishes materials out of which the living and ordered truth of the matter must be evolved.[1] And to realize the truth of things, in its order, relations, and proportions, takes time, — more time as the truth is more far-reaching and momentous. The minds alike of those who proclaim the truth and of those who receive it must grow and ripen; must from a confused mass of incidents and sayings get a just idea of the bearings and relationships of things. So it was in the years succeeding Christ's earthly ministry. While the early apostles had charge, indeed, of a unique fund of fact, both their own realization of the events of Jesus' ministry was too hazy and undigested, and the state of the infant church was too primitive, for the speedy development of a Christian literature. A literature is the result of a matured organic growth of thought and life. The men who were to teach the world such momentous things must outgrow their rudimental notions, correct their errors of realization and interpretation, discard their Jewish provincialism, and take the pace of the world's thought. And all this must be a slow, gradual process, working its results into shape in numerous communities of disciples and converts scattered through the provinces from Jerusalem to Rome, who were learning little by little what it was to be Christians.

Accordingly, for the first generation of Christians the events and words of Christ's life were too uncoördinated in memory, and perhaps too constantly in process of accumulation, to be drawn up in permanent literary form. The apostles and many others were living who had seen and heard

[1] Cf. Wilson, "The Truth of the Matter," from "Mere Literature," pp. 161 f.

him, and in their preaching they referred to his ministry familiarly as to well-known recent events. Less pains were taken also, probably, to preserve the facts in writing, because during all the first generation (cf. Mark xiii, 30) the belief was prevalent that Christ's second coming was near. There was felt to be little occasion, therefore, to make the life of One only temporarily absent the subject of a formal and finished history.

The Changed Perspective

As the survivors of Jesus' time began, however, to die off, and then as Jerusalem was destroyed (A.D. 70), breaking up the old order of things without a recognized Messianic order to replace it, the need was increasingly felt of a permanent record for the use of generations to come. The immediate influence of the primal announcements — resurrection, spiritual outpouring, fulfillment, parousia — was somewhat dulled or, rather, diffused, and the church was settling down to a steady pace of growth and organization. For this state of things a literature more distinctive than that of the Old Testament, and more educative than these simple matters of announcement, was needed. Besides, the facts of Jesus' ministry, as they accumulated, were standing out more clearly related and proportioned, as men viewed them more at a distance of time. In a word, the times were getting ripe for the evolution of a new line of sacred literature.

NOTE. Tennyson has described how the obscurity of present experience passes into the clearness and realization due to a more distant view ("In Memoriam," xxiv):

> Or that the past will always win
> A glory from its being far,
> And orb into the perfect star
> We saw not when we moved therein.

Browning describes the same historic consciousness more at length, applying the need of it to this very time of gospel development (A Death in the Desert, ll. 235–243):

Just thus, ye needs must apprehend what truth
I see, reduced to plain historic fact,
Diminished into clearness, proved a point
And far away: ye would withdraw your sense
From out eternity, strain it upon time,
Then stand before that fact, that Life and Death,
Stay there at gaze, till it dispart, dispread,
As though a star should open out, all sides,
Grow the world on you, as it is my world.

This is assumed to have been said by St. John, the supposed writer of the fourth gospel, just as, late in the first century, he was about to die.

II

Source-Gospels and Logia.[1] Meanwhile, through the preaching of apostolic eyewitnesses, there were gradually accumulated stores of reminiscence, in which Jesus' words and acts were recounted from mouth to mouth, and circulated from one church to another, until a goodly body of such material was in general possession and used for teaching purposes. How such facts of Jesus' ministry would pass into common currency may be illustrated by a quotation made by St. Paul in one of his discourses (Acts xx, 35), in which he, though not an ear-witness, refers to a saying of Jesus, not elsewhere recorded, which evidently he and his hearers had obtained from common and well-known report. A store of such things was gradually accumulating (cf. 1 Tim. vi, 3 for recognition of these) and keeping alive in the thought of the Christian communities the mind of the Master.

This material, by constant retelling, assumed a kind of stereotyped form, which favored the purity and carefulness of the tradition. One man's reminiscence would be corrected or tempered by another's, and the sense of its sacred import would deter the reverent disciples from taking liberties with it. Doubtless, too, this material was in various centers noted down in writing, and thus in a measure secured from fanciful additions and exaggerations. That there were such

[1] Cf. Hill, "Introduction to the Life of Christ," pp. 26 ff.

written collections seems certain from the fact that the same event is told with variations in the different gospels, and yet with a general uniformity of phraseology which betokens a general base of supplies. There could not have been very many such collections in existence, however, before the gospels as we have them began to be compiled, else more traces of them would be found.

NOTE. In the preface to his gospel St. Luke speaks of narratives in such a way as to indicate that by his time gospel-making was quite vigorous. These were evidently so imperfect, however, that his own gospel and those of the other evangelists drove them out by the survival of the fittest. In Pick, "Paralipomena: Remains of Gospels and Sayings of Christ," is a carefully compiled collection of fragments and scattered sayings from all the early sources that have been discovered.

Of the supposable first-hand gospel sources, three main ones may be named which by tradition have been associated with three of the immediate apostles.

Personal Sources

1. With the apostle Peter has been associated a plain and vigorous narrative, now identified with the Gospel of Mark, which Justin Martyr (cir. 100–165) calls the Memorabilia of Peter.[1] Its connection with Peter is not absolutely proved, though very possible and natural. From the fact that the events of the last week are more full and vivid than the rest, it seems certain that the writer was a resident of Jerusalem and an eyewitness who, as it would seem, added material of his own to what he had heard from St. Peter. One uncoördinated incident (Mark xiv, 51, 52) seems quite motiveless unless it happened to the narrator himself, who, if this is so, was then a young man. This may well have been John Mark, who afterward was an attendant of the apostles (Acts xii, 25; xv, 37, 39), whom Peter calls "his son" (1 Pet. v, 13), and in whose mother's house the early Christians used to gather (Acts xii, 12). The association of this gospel with Peter is thus very probable.

[1] See Burkitt, "Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus," p. 84.

2. With the apostle Matthew, on much less definite grounds, is associated a body of so-called *logia*, or sayings of Jesus, written first in Aramaic. These, however, may have been mere fugitive notes of Jesus' discourses, and perhaps of the coincidences between events of Jesus' life and prophecy, such as are numerous in Matthew's gospel. It is Papias who attributes such a body of sayings to the publican disciple Matthew, but the original document is hopelessly lost, and it cannot be determined what it contained. With the compiling of finished gospels it would naturally disappear.

3. With the apostle John is associated the fourth gospel; this because he is identified with "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who, according to the testimonial appended to the gospel, "is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things" (John xxi, 24). Neither is this disciple's name given, nor is John's name mentioned in the gospel; and it is only by tradition that John's name is associated with the composition of it. What is of more importance, however, is the fact that if written by the disciple in question the gospel is an eyewitness source. The first-hand material that it contains, however, has in the course of many years (for the gospel was at all events written near the end of the century), with the change due to time and ripened meditation, assumed a character very different from that of the other gospels. This has caused scholars to consider it in a class by itself, apart from the synoptics. It will come up for later consideration, as belonging to the Literature of Values.[1]

Besides the accounts traceable to the apostles themselves, it is not unlikely that single episodes or discourses of Jesus' ministry may have circulated in detached documents,[2] and afterwards have been incorporated in the completed gospels. His discourse on the Last Times, Mark xiii and Matthew xxiv, which would have special significance for its bearing

[1] See "The Story Told Once More," pp. 645–651, below.

[2] See Burkitt, "The Gospel History and its Transmission," pp. 62, 127.

on the parousia, would be a likely case in point. The story of the woman taken in adultery (John viii, 1–11), which is lacking in many ancient manuscripts and yet has on it the hall-mark of authenticity, may be another example. Nor will it do to ignore the numerous reminiscences of unnamed persons which must have been forthcoming when our gospels began to be compiled; much as stories of the life of Lincoln are collected nowadays. It will be noted that about the same time has elapsed since Lincoln's death as had then elapsed since the crucifixion, and we can think how easy it was to verify or correct, for permanent record, stories that had acquired a more or less stereotyped form by oral recounting. St. Luke intimates in his preface (Luke i, 2) that some of his information came from individual sources. His account of the birth of John the Baptist and of the birth and infancy of Jesus (Luke i and ii), if not pure invention, must have been of this private sort.

Summary of Apparent Sources

Of the three synoptic gospels as we have them, Mark, which was the earliest written, may be regarded as also a source-gospel, the only one that has come down to us intact. It is made the basis of their compiled gospels by the authors both of Matthew and of Luke; in fact, the substance of almost every verse of Mark may be found in one or both of them. It furnished the biographical and chronological backbone for the composite gospel narrative — a groundwork of plan from which the others may at times digress, but to which they return.

Besides this primitive gospel, the authors of Matthew and Luke drew from another source, which the critics call Q (for the German *Quelle*, "source"), especially for the discourses of Jesus. This may be the source that Papias meant when he spoke of the *logia*, or sayings of Matthew, but there is no certainty.

In addition to these, Luke had certain unknown sources of his own, both for the infancy and early years and for

the latter part of the ministry. From these unknown sources he has drawn some of the most significant parables, like that of the Lost Son, of the Good Samaritan, of Dives and Lazarus, and of the Pharisee and the Publican. Already, when he begins to write, he says that "many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative"; which implies that he had much material to sift and adjust to his purpose.

III

The Synoptic Gospels as Completed. Beginning with the earliest written, the Gospel of Mark, we find in the successive gospels a kind of gradation. From a literature of pure fact or reportage, such as would come from a plain and forthright mind like that of Peter, through rising degrees of a growing sense for values, we find in the other gospels a tendency to add coloring and interpretative elements. This corresponds to the growing consciousness on the part of the Christian communities, as time went on, of deeper meanings in Christ's personality and ministry, and the desire to coördinate these meanings with the known values of life. The same spiritual desire and growth have continued until this day, and will always continue; creating in a true sense an unending Bible, as each new generation sees things in new lights and applications. The gospels embody but the first stage and tendency, the stage suited to the development of a New Testament canon; and in this stage, even in the case of the latest gospel, that of John, these reports of Jesus' life and words remain essentially a literature of fact.

1. The Gospel of Mark

This gospel answers not unfitly to what we should naturally expect if we assumed it to have come, as tradition says, from the preaching of Peter. One of his reported discourses in the Book of Acts, indeed, contains a kind of epitome of this whole gospel in a few verses. Peter himself was an apostolic preacher and leader, not a man of

letters. But it is reasonable to suppose that John Mark, whose intimacy with the apostles we have seen, was the compiler and writer; not a mere amanuensis, but himself to some extent, especially during the last days in Jerusalem, an eyewitness.

NOTE. Peter's discourse, Acts x, 34–43, was given to the centurion Cornelius and his household, being the first address Peter gave to a Gentile audience. This epitome of his gospel message is here given from "The Corrected English New Testament":

"The message which he (God) sent to the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace through Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all — even that word, as ye yourselves know, was published throughout all Judea, beginning with Galilee — after the baptism which John preached — concerning Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem, he did; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised on the third day; and showed him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he had risen from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that this is he who was appointed by God to be the judge of living and dead. To him all the prophets give witness that, through his name, whosoever believeth on him shall receive forgiveness of sins."

The purpose of the book is simple and direct. Beginning not at the birth of Jesus, as a biography would, but at the preaching of John the Baptist when Jesus entered upon his ministry, its aim is to set forth "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark i, 1). Designed for Roman readers, to whom the idea of the Son of God with its connotation of dignity and power would be natural and congenial,[1] the gospel concerns itself with a plain narration of the things Jesus did during his ministry — works which, without asserting divinity, yet evince the tremendous power inherent in One who acts in divine character. Of his teaching the gospel has

[1] Cf. the words of Roman centurions, Luke vii, 6–8; Mark xv, 39.

not so full and systematic reports as have the others, nor is it concerned to compare his life minutely with prophetic prediction. It simply recounts, in a matter-of-fact way, what he did and the words immediately connected therewith, as "he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil."

The story is told with simple directness and vigor, and with many such touches as only an eyewitness would give. Of all the synoptic gospels this gives most the impression of first-hand contact with the uncolored facts of Jesus' life. As a source-gospel it furnished, as has already been noted, the framework of order and sequence on which all the accounts of the ministry are based.

2. The Gospel of Matthew

As the Gospel of Mark views Jesus as the Son of God, the Gospel of Matthew presents him no less distinctly as the Messiah, the Coming One foretold by the prophets and expected as the King of Israel. The portrayal of him in that light would of course be designed primarily for Christians of Jewish antecedents. The theme that seems to have been in the writer's mind may be expressed as: The Messianic King and the Beginnings of his Reign.

The gospel accordingly begins with a genealogy (Matt. i, 1–17) giving Jesus' descent from David and Abraham; and the stories of his infancy narrate the royal homage paid him by Eastern Magi, and the rivalry of which King Herod was suspicious and jealous and which he sought to suppress by the child's death (Matt. ii). After Jesus' baptism, where John the Baptist was conscious of his majesty (Matt. iii, 14), his ordeal of temptation determined the manner of his kingdom as contrasted with the kingdoms of the earth (iv, 1–11). So throughout the gospel the subject matter is keyed to the note of royalty. Jesus is the Messiah, King of men, and his words are concerned with the principles of his kingdom, the kingdom of heaven.

This gospel, more didactic than Mark, concerns itself more with the teachings of Jesus than with the historic sequence of his ministry; which teachings it gathers into groups forming several somewhat extended discourses, with enough narrative material between to give them a natural setting and coördination. The most important of these discourses is the so-called Sermon on the Mount (chaps. v–vii), which, though its sections may have been given at different times, is so related as to embody a kind of charter or manifesto of the kingdom of heaven and to reveal the relation of this new charter to the old law.

NOTE. On the theory that the discourses of Jesus form the main scheme of Matthew's gospel, while the incidents are connective and ancillary, the gospel may be regarded as having for substance five didactic groups or discourses:

1. The charter or principle of the kingdom, chaps. v–vii.
2. The charge to the apostles who have the kingdom to maintain, chap. x.
3. The definition of the kingdom in parabolic teaching, chap. xiii.
4. The internal relations of the kingdom and its spirit, chap. xviii.
5. The culmination of the kingdom and the eternal test of citizenship therein, chaps. xxiv, xxv.

Another striking characteristic of this gospel is its frequent citation of Old Testament prophecies. These citations differ much in didactic value. Some of them betoken a large and liberal sense of prophetic meaning and scope (for example, ii, 6; iv, 15; xii, 18–21); others are more far-fetched, as if the fulfillment of prophecy meant verifying coincidences of prediction and event (for example, ii, 18, 23). A kind of middle sense of values may be seen in i, 23; xxi, 5. This variety, whether so intended or not, has the effect of finding and satisfying different grades of mind, — the unlearned and literal as well as the scholarly and poetic. To all classes the writer would certainly show that Jesus was indeed the Messianic king who, though so different from anticipation, yet fulfilled all reasonable expectations and gave them reality.

Luke, who was the author both of this gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles, seems to have designed the two as continuous with each other. In the preface to the Acts (Acts i, 1–5) he speaks of the gospel as a "treatise . . . concerning all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up." The two histories, then, he regarded as two stages in an essentially continuous ministry; namely, first, as conducted personally in the body and, secondly, as conducted through the apostles by his directing and supporting spirit.

3. The Gospel of Luke

If the first two gospels are concerned with the divine aspects of Jesus' personality, as Son of God (Mark) and as Messiah (Matthew), Luke may be called more distinctively the Gospel of the Son of Man. It is especially in Jesus' sweet and strong humanity, his helpful fellowship with all, that Luke regards him. The Lukan accounts of the infancy and childhood portray him as a very human child, yet filled with wisdom and piety; and his descent is traced back not to David or Abraham but to Adam, the father of humanity. It is Luke, as we have noted, who narrates how Jesus took upon himself the ministry of healing and emancipation prophesied in the Second Isaiah (Luke iv, 16–22). His gospel preserves for us also many instances of Jesus' kindness and good will not to the Jewish nation alone or to disciples but to man as man. He is indeed the friend of publicans and sinners and risks odium thereby (cf. xv, 1, 2; xix, 7); yet while in his parable he satirizes the self-righteousness of the Pharisee (xviii, 9–13), he does not hesitate to eat with Pharisees, even while in their presence he accepts the homage of an outcast woman. The parables of the Lost Son (xv, 11–32) and of the Good Samaritan (x, 30–35), both peculiar to Luke, give a fair keynote of the broad humanity of the gospel; such a spirit as would become one who, himself a Gentile Christian, was an intimate companion of Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Luke writes more like a historian than do the other Evangelists: giving the narrative not in mere annalistic sequence like Mark, nor in didactic order like Matthew, but with the causes and motives that give the events a historic relation and coherence. He is also the master of a more finished literary style. As he himself was not an eyewitness of any of Jesus' life, nor a native of Palestine, he shows a certain detachment from the inherited ideas and prejudices of the Jews, which qualifies him all the better to weigh and verify his historical material and put it in a form that readers of all nations can appropriate.

NOTE. The fourth gospel, the profoundest account of Jesus' personality and work, comes up more fitly, perhaps, in the next chapter, The Literature of Values (see p. 645). This, not because it is untrue to fact, or to eyewitness testimony, but because it was written at a time so much later that the facts of Jesus' personality had come to be understood in their larger and divine values. It is written, in other words, not with a merely historical but with a predominantly interpretative purpose (see John xx, 31).

During the Transition

It was late in the first century before the narrative gospels, as completed, became the literary basis for the education of the growing church. We are to note, however, that it was not because the facts of Jesus' life were remote or had not come to light that the systematic record of them was so long delayed. The exact opposite is closer to the truth. It was because they were so near, because they were a present luminous reality instead of a past and fading history, that the century waited so long for a written gospel. Meanwhile, through the companionship and instruction of apostles who had seen and heard, through apostolic letters sent to the churches and circulated from community to community, and through the felt impulsion and power of the spirit of Christ, the faith of the early Christians was kept living and operative, forming an *ecclesia*, a body of believers with common motives and ideals separate

from the world. It is to the record of this body, and the movement of its activities while waiting for the completed literature of fact, that we now turn.

III. The Acts of the Apostles

As we see by comparing the preface to the Gospel of Luke with that to the Acts of the Apostles, the same person who wrote the gospel wrote also the other account, addressing both to a certain Theophilus (Luke i, 3; Acts i, 1), who was undoubtedly a Gentile Christian. In writing the Acts he had the advantage, for parts of it, of being an eye-witness, having been a companion of St. Paul on some of the latter's missionary journeys, — a fact indicated by his use of the first person in narrating the incidents at which he was present. For the parts of the history not relating to St. Paul he had to depend, as in the compilation of his gospel, on the written and oral reports of other persons. The history is brought down to the time of St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, but whether written before or after the apostle's death is uncertain.

1

As Continuation of a Prior History. The Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, is a history projected as a continuation of his gospel to give an account of Christ's work through authorized representatives, as these witnessed to him and proclaimed his truth from Jerusalem to Rome. The two books give, then, in one connected view an account of the Christian movement from the birth of Jesus to the introduction of his teachings in the capital of the world. From there the movement could be trusted to radiate and grow until the whole earth responded to its influence.

Luke's warrant for presenting his history in this form and compass is intimated in Christ's charge to his apostles just before his ascension. "It is not for you," he said, "to

know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you ; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i, 7, 8). They had supposed that he would speedily set up his kingdom through the supernatural power which his resurrection had conferred (cf. Acts i, 6). Instead of encouraging that hope, however, he directed them to institute a movement of teaching and preaching similiar to what his had been, without reference to time and with no limitation of territory, leaving his return to take care of itself. Then in their sight he ascended, and angels, appearing, predicted his return (i, 9–11).

By the time Luke wrote his history of these apostles' acts the true state of the case was clear. They were the initiators of a movement, continuous with Jesus' work, which was destined to be world-wide and indefinitely enduring, a movement taking its place among the supremely great forces of history. Luke, from his historical instinct, saw this, and recounted its initial and determinative stages in the Acts of the Apostles.

II

As Related to the Planting of Christianity. The history comprised in the Acts of the Apostles falls into two well-marked divisions or stages.

1. For twelve chapters the history is given as it relates to the initial steps in the work of disseminating the gospel. It tells of the Pentecostal revival in Jerusalem ; of the organization of systematic ministry under Peter and John as leaders ; of the appointment of deacons or helpers, among whom were Stephen the first martyr and Philip the first itinerant evangelist ; of the rise of a persecution which scattered the first group of workers and enlarged the sphere of their ministry ; of the conversion of Saul, the chief persecutor ; of the beginning of work with Gentiles by the divinely directed agency

of Peter — until a vigorous center of work both with Jews and Gentiles was established at Antioch in northern Syria. All this time the new work was regarded, and regarded itself, as the culmination and fulfillment of Judaism. The faith was called "The Way" (Acts ix, 2; xix, 9, 23; xxii, 4; xxiv, 14, 22; cf. John xiv, 6), a name apparently originated by St. Paul and his circle. In Antioch, however, where the larger significance of the movement began to be perceived through the teaching of Barnabas, the disciples got the name of Christians (see Acts xi, 26), — a nickname at first, perhaps, but accepted, like the modern name "Methodists," and made forever honorable.

2. The second half of the book, chapters xiii to xxviii, is devoted mainly to the work of St. Paul, as he made several extended missionary journeys, working with extraordinary energy and encountering untold hardships (cf. 2 Cor. xi, 22–33) in his evangelizing zeal, which was as great for Christianity as his enthusiasm had formerly been for Pharisaic Judaism. In these journeys he visited the chief centers of influence and culture in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece, planting churches at such strategical points as Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and witnessing not without result in the center of culture, Athens; until, after being arrested on a return to Jerusalem and appealing his case to Cæsar, he was brought as a state prisoner to Rome, the world's capital.

In chapter xvi, 10, without warning or explanation, the writer begins to speak in the first person ("*we* endeavored," etc.), and for much of the remaining history this manner of narration is kept up, showing that Luke became Paul's companion (probably at Troas) and was thus not only an eyewitness of many events in Paul's career but in a position to learn many earlier facts at first hand. That he was a faithful and congenial friend of Paul is indicated in Paul's epistles, where he is designated as "the beloved physician"

(Col. iv, 14), and where he is mentioned as Paul's only companion in the latter's final imprisonment (2 Tim. iv, 11).

Thus in these two books, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts, we have the continuous story of Christian times, from the birth of Jesus until the closing years of the greatest apostle, as told by one man, a faithful and competent historian.

CHAPTER XI

THE LITERATURE OF VALUES

[Cir. A. D. 47 to cir. 100]

OUR distinction in this chapter and the preceding between the literature of fact and the literature of values is not meant as a hard and fast discrimination. It names rather the general design and trend of the Gospels and the Acts on the one hand, and of the remaining literature, mainly in epistolary form, on the other. The predominant object, in the one case, is to give information of things not before generally known, and, in the other case, to give the meanings of things already received and familiar.

But the two kinds of literary purpose continually meet and blend. The gospels, designed for all sorts and conditions of men, must not only narrate the facts of Jesus' life but must give them in such order, emphasis, and proportion as to reveal their values in the sum of life and truth. The epistles, designed for the communities of Christians who already know and accept the central Personality, not only give its values for Christian faith and doctrine but keep constantly in the foreground the basis of fact. This is well expressed by one of the apostolic writers in one of his letters. "We did not follow cunningly devised fables," he says, "when we made known to you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Pet. i, 16). Thus the Christian writers' sense of the values of which they were in charge was not that of something speculative, like a philosophy, or of something invented, like a work of fiction, but of the simple

application of facts to life, — facts both of history and of personal experience (cf. Acts v, 32).

Main Lines of Values. In three main lines the literary and spiritual values set forth in the epistolary part of the New Testament may be summarized. They relate themselves to past, present, and future; or as a New Testament writer, sensible of the fact that the whole order of values centers in one divine Person, expresses it: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and for ever" (Heb. xiii, 8).

1. The values derived from the past, as this is represented in the unique history of the Hebrew race and in the body of Old Testament literature. Although of universal appeal and validity, these values derive mainly from Hebrew sources (cf. John iv, 22); yet doubtless also in St. Paul's teaching to Gentiles much is adapted to inherited Greek ways of thinking. Thus the highest truth that the past has yielded, through its history, its poetry, its prophecy, its law and ritual, is related to the Christian era as promise to realization, or as shadow to substance (cf. Col. ii, 17; Heb. x, 1); the substance or fulfillment being expressed in the comprehensive term Christ ("the body," Col. ii, 17). The inclusive statement of this idea is given at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things" (Heb. i, 1).

As Derived from the Past

2. The values inherent in present experience, as believers become more intimately conversant with the Christian idea and power. These all center in the type of life revealed in the personality of Christ, who is regarded less as a historic personage with his work finished than as a present, vitalizing spirit continuing his activity by the inner power he exerts in men's lives. Such power his followers are aware of in themselves. It is that

As Available in the Present

wonderful illumination and working energy which has come upon them as the Holy Spirit; a power which they identify with Christ, as if his personality had blended with theirs, bringing their thought and conduct under a new law of being. St. Paul calls this "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii, 2).

Thus, as men's sense of values grows, the historic Jesus, who as a Personage once living on earth must be past and outside of them, becomes in their idea the Christ within, a Messiah increasingly identified with the highest ideals of manhood. Every individual man who takes Christ as his spiritual Lord is thus related to him; Christ is each man's truest manhood, and the community of those who believe in him are related to him as bodily members are related to the head whence comes their wisdom and guidance (see 1 Cor. xii, 4–31). The church is accordingly called the body of Christ (Eph. i, 23; iv, 12; Col. ii, 19), under which figure it is regarded as an organism directed by his spirit, and yet with each member performing his free individual function, contributing to one unity of heart and will. Such is the lofty ideal of present values that under the teaching of such men as St. Paul come to be associated with the Christian calling.

3. The values not yet realized but still future. The New Testament literature takes us only far enough to give the germs and principles of a vast development of ideas and their applications to life and history. The Christian era is not more truly a fulfillment than a prophecy. All the values derived from the past or secured in the present are but an "earnest" (cf. Eph. i, 14), a guaranty of greater things to come. In thus forecasting the large future the Scripture writers recognize no real line of distinction between the future beyond death and the future of ennobled manhood here on the earth. The conception seems rather to be of one family in heaven and earth (cf. Eph. iii, 15;

As yet to be Realized

Heb. xii, 22, 23), like two provinces of one universal commonwealth, raised to a higher grade of being by that power of Christ which is felt as a present resurrection (Col. iii, 1–4), actuated by one spirit and working to one end. All this comes to be regarded as the process, in individual and society alike, of becoming more thoroughly like Christ, a state of being evidenced by increasing ability to see him as he is (1 John iii, 2; cf. 1 Cor. xiii, 12). Such is the tremendous forecast of the future to which Christianity is committed.

I. Literary Gifts and Medium of Publication

To get a just idea of the peculiar power and success of the New Testament literature, we need to take account of the writers from whom it comes and of the literary medium or vehicle in which they expressed themselves.

I

The Writers and their Qualifications. The historical portions of the New Testament, comprising the gospels and the Acts, came ultimately, as we have seen, from the reports and preaching of common men, whose schooling had been the companionship of Jesus and whose purpose was to give a truthful and candid statement of what they had seen and heard. For this reportage of fact such men were the fit and sufficient narrators; and among the accounts that came from their teaching we have the work of one at least, the Evangelist Luke, who proved to be no mean historian.

For interpreting the moral and spiritual values of these facts, however, for maintaining these against perversion and denial, and for adjusting the new materials of Christian faith to the old ideas and prophecies that had led up to them, men of a different type of culture were needed, or at least were providentially forthcoming. They must be men of keen and disciplined minds, able to meet the thought and learning

of their day on its own ground. They must cultivate the art of so presenting the truth that it would be both sound in reasoning and attractive in form. This need, which is distinctively literary, was justly felt by the early apostolic teachers. St. Peter, more a man of vigorous action than of skillful speech, urges it upon his readers. "Ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. iii, 15), is his counsel to his readers. Feeling his own limitations in abstruse learning, however, he refers them to his great colleague St. Paul (2 Pet. iii, 15, 16, — if Peter's, which is by some doubted), who can deal masterfully with the hard problems. And St. Paul himself is concerned not only with the weighty and solid qualities of discourse but with the charm and wit necessary to make it attractive. "Let your speech," he says, "be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. iv, 6). Such were the felt needs of the early era, when essentially new values of life must make headway in a cultured and civilized world.

The need was abundantly supplied. As we consider the New Testament writings, their evident power and beauty, we cannot but be aware that the early church had at its service the very best minds of its age, minds qualified, some in one way, some in another, to present a rounded and varied body of Christian truth.

Preëminent among these leaders of thought are to be named two: St. Paul, and the author of the fourth gospel.

The Personal Sources

The former, a man born in Tarsus, a Greek university center, who had studied Jewish learning under Gamaliel, contributes to the New Testament the bulk of its epistolary literature. The latter, who calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved," was a man who, before he wrote, had long meditated upon the most intimate utterances of the Master and had tested them by rare powers of intuition.

Besides these two may be mentioned St. Peter, to whom are ascribed two epistles, and two brothers of Jesus, namely, James and Jude. Peter was the leader of the original company of apostles, and so the chief apostolic authority in the Jewish branch of the church. James, who became a Christian after Jesus' resurrection, was the head of the Jerusalem church, and, as brother, familiar with the mind and temperament of Jesus. He was the author of one epistle, as was also Jude.

One epistle alone, the epistle to the Hebrews, more like a treatise than a letter, is anonymous. It has been attributed to St. Paul, but the style does not allow us to maintain this.

Thus, unlike most of the Old Testament, the literature of the New is so associated with known writers that we can trace and appreciate in eminent degree the intimate personal element in it, feeling the power not of a book but of a living man.

II

The Epistle Form and its Uses. All the literary works of the New Testament, succeeding to the gospels and the Acts, are in whole or in part put in epistolary form, in most cases employing the conventional phrases in vogue for opening and closing. None of these letters, it would seem, were intended to be strictly private. The third epistle of John, addressed to Gaius, is most nearly so, but second John, addressed "to the elect lady," probably designated a whole church under that term. St. Paul's letter to Philemon, though mainly personal, includes not only the individual addressed but several others and the church in his house; and his letters to Timothy and Titus, two prominent pastors, are addressed to them in their professional capacity.

The letters of the New Testament were sent mostly to churches, with the design of being read and heeded as a

current literature: as doctrines or counsels imparted by an authoritative teacher at a time when religious authority was centered not in a book nor in church decrees, but in a person. They represent the pioneer work of Christian teaching. Some of the earlier written ones, as to the Thessalonians, the Galatians, and the Corinthians, concern themselves more particularly with the situations or problems of the individual church, making these a peg, as it were, on which to hang truths of permanent and universal import. Others of the letters, however, were intended as circular letters (cf. Col. iv, 16), to be copied and distributed to several churches, addressing themselves thus to the common Christian situation. With the efficient postal system in use in the Roman Empire such epistolary communication had become the most prevalent means of publication. Facility of travel also promoted the custom of using private messengers or church helpers and delegates in the service.

The Familiar Tone and Touch

As we reach this latest stage in the Biblical literature it is well to note the difference, in tone and style, between the New Testament and the Old. The difference corresponds to the difference of relation between author and audience. The Old Testament, made up of history, prophecy, poetry, law, wisdom, brings its truth to nations and communities; and in its sublime forms and style there is a certain remoteness of relation, a lack of mutualness and sympathy. In the New Testament the form has become epistolary, the most personal and familiar of literary forms, as of persons known individually to each other. It is friendly and conversational. There is an absence of formality and an intimacy of assumed relation which promote good will, courtesy, mutual understanding. On the part of the writer there is no posing as lawgiver, prophet, or sage. Although from an apostle it is like brother to brother and friend to friend, on a footing of mutual respect and equality. Such is the Christian relation with which the literary

sentiment of the Bible culminates. Its letters may indeed rise to heights of poetic beauty or emotional fervor; may contain profound and weighty thought; but the intimate personal tone keeps them from being academic or having the air of a labored literary effort. The gospels, too, embodying the conversational talks and parables of Jesus, are of the same natural feeling and fiber. Thus it is of noteworthy significance that the Bible, which begins with the lofty and didactic, ends with the personal and familiar.

NOTE. *The Epistolary Form and Style.* On the epistolary form and style, as these figure in the life of the early churches, Sir William M. Ramsay ("Letters to the Seven Churches," p. 208) remarks:

"A philosophic exposition of truth was apt to become abstract and unreal; the dialogue form, which the Greeks loved and some of the Christian writers adopted, was apt to degenerate into looseness and mere literary display; but the letter, as already elaborated by great thinkers and artists who were his predecessors, was determined for [the Christian teacher] as the best medium of expression. In this form . . . literature, statesmanship, ethics, and religion met, and placed the simple letter on the highest level of practical power. Due regard to the practical needs of the congregation which he addressed prevented the writer of a letter from losing hold on the hard facts and serious realities of life. The spirit of the lawgiver raised him above all danger of sinking into the commonplace and the trivial. Great principles must be expressed in the Christian letter. And finally it must have literary form as a permanent monument of teaching and legislation."

Written with reference to the oracular epistles to the churches of Asia in Revelation ii and iii, — the most formal letters in the New Testament.

II. SAINT PAUL AS ORATOR AND LETTER WRITER

In tracing the literature of fact as an eventual outgrowth of the early apostolic preaching, we have gone beyond the dates of the earlier New Testament writings. We have seen what the story of Jesus' life and ministry became when a generation had passed, after the scattered reminiscences of eyewitnesses were in, and time had been given for the facts to have been sifted, ordered, and systematized.

We must now return to an earlier period. The first New Testament works to be written in finished form were not the synoptic gospels and the Acts, but the main body of the epistles. And of these the earliest, unless we except the Epistle of James, were the great epistles of St. Paul.

I

Saint Paul the Man. It is important that we take account of this note of time and precedence. Of all the writers represented in the New Testament literature St. Paul was by far the most vigorous, scholarly, and creative. When we consider what he really accomplished — to make the Jewish body of truth universal, to make the ideal for which Jesus lived and died a force vital and powerful throughout the lands and the ages — we must put him in the forefront of the world's great thinkers. Not only in his own personal utterances is this true, but during the period while the gospel record itself was inchoate his shaping mind did much, through writing and personal evangelism, to set his creative stamp upon it. To him it fell preëminently to make the Christian truth reveal itself among Jews and Gentiles in its true value, meaning, and proportion.

Though St. Luke's account of St. Paul's missionary activities in the Acts has no design of being biographical, nor is St. Paul himself in his epistles concerned with the personal events of his life — touching upon these, indeed, when he has to do so, reluctantly (cf. 2 Cor. xi, 21 ff.) — yet there is no other personality of Scripture, aside from that of Jesus, whom we know so well. His writings are the perfect reflection of that Christian character which became to him the supreme principle of his life. Besides St. Luke's biographical details there are a few very valuable autobiographic touches in his utterances and writings: notably his twice-given account of his early life and conversion, in his speech before his own nation in Jerusalem (Acts xxii, 3–21), and

in his address before King Agrippa and the procurator Festus (Acts xxvi, 1–23); his account of the beginning of his apostleship, as written to the Galatians who had doubted its genuineness (Gal. i, 11–ii, 14); his review of his reasons alike for pride and humility, as recounted to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xi, 16–xii, 10; cf. Phil. iii, 4–7); and his analysis of his experience with his own sinful nature, as written for the instruction of the Roman Christians (Rom. vii). All these show with what depth and intensity his Christian ideas, which had come upon his convictions in one illuminative moment, had wrought themselves into his life.

His Endowments, Native and Cultural

Of St. Paul's early life we get enough from his own words to show what providential fitness he had both by birth and education for his great mission. A native of Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts xxi, 39), which city was a center of the liberal learning of his time, he was of pure Jewish blood (Phil. iii, 5), and proud both of his race and of his tribe; was in religion of the most strict and orthodox Jewish sect, that of the Pharisees (Acts xxvi, 5), and extremely zealous for their customs and traditions; was educated from early youth under Gamaliel, "the most learned rabbi of the age," in the capital city Jerusalem (Acts xxii, 3). Being so expert in all that the Jews deemed most valuable in thought, he was thus fitted to deal with Jews on their own ground; and living from birth in the atmosphere of Greek ideas, he was correspondingly fitted to adapt his teachings to the Gentile range and color of thought. Add to this that he had from birth the rights and freedom of a Roman citizen (Acts xxii, 28), which fact gave him the privileges and immunities that he needed in traversing any part of the Empire. Of this advantage he availed himself at several crucial points of his career (Acts xvi, 37–40; xxii, 25; xxv, 11). His zeal before his conversion in persecuting the Christians, for which he never ceased to blame himself, was after all a sign of his sincerity of purpose and

so, though mistaken, was quite consistent with a good conscience (Acts xxiii, 1), and, as well-directed energy, would prove an invaluable trait in the arduous work of a Christian apostle. Thus all the elements of his personality, outer and inner, were most fortunately mixed to fit him for the distinctive career to which he was commissioned.

His Life's Turning Point

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus from Judaism to Christianity is justly regarded as one of the most far-reaching events of history. The story of it is narrated no fewer than three times (Acts ix, xxii, xxvi): once in St. Luke's own historical style, and twice in St. Luke's reports of St. Paul's speeches. The three accounts agree in essentials, the slight differences being due to different occasions and purposes of the recounting.

The occasion of Saul's sudden conversion resolves itself virtually into the simple fact that he saw the Christ as he is and identified him with Jesus of Nazareth. This occurred in a vision that he had on the way to Damascus, while he was on a fanatical errand of persecution; and the Being he saw was the glorified Jesus, appearing several years after his resurrection and identifying himself as the One whom Saul was persecuting. The apostle never doubted that this was as real and veritable an interview as if Jesus were still in the flesh; and all his life thereafter was spent in simple obedience to the direction he then obtained. To him it was a truly objective experience, like that of the other apostles.

Yet not all objective. In spite of Saul's mistaken opposition up to that time, there was in him a subjective readiness to respond to Christ when he saw him in the true light. His own interpretation of the event was that at the fitting time God was pleased to reveal His Son *in* him (Gal. i, 16). From that time forth his ideal was to realize in word and work the same spirit of life that had actuated Jesus in his ministry, and especially in his sacrificial death as the way to resurrection (Phil. iii, 10, 11). The sense of this relation

to Christ became in time so intimate that it was like an interfusion of a greater personality with his; for him, "to live," he said, "was Christ" (Phil. i, 21).

This consciousness of the deep meaning of his and the Christian life, however, did not come to Saul at once on his conversion. He must take time for adjustment to his new spiritual condition and ideal. This must be done in solitude and self-examination. Accordingly, he spent the first three years after his conversion in Arabia (Gal. i, 17, 18), doubtless in searching study and meditation. Then, going up to Jerusalem, he made a fortnight's visit to St. Peter and saw St. James the Lord's brother (Gal. i, 18–19). From these men he doubtless got such information about Jesus' earthly life as he would need for the factual basis of his own teaching. What he habitually preached, however, was rather the values than the external facts of Jesus' ministry (cf. 2 Cor. v, 16); which values he deduced from the Christ he had seen in vision, who had become the risen Lord and Brother of every man.

In this peculiar experience of St. Paul (for such his name became after he began preaching, cf. Acts xiii, 9) we discern two elements of special fitness, superior to what we find in the older apostles, for the distinctive literary work that fell to him to do. First, his conversion was not a reversal of his life's ideas but an adjustment and concentration, in which he continued to cherish all the permanent values of Judaism and could see their consummation and fulfillment. Secondly, even by the fact that he had not been a personal companion of Jesus he could the better interpret the idealism of the Christ to men of every nation who themselves must receive him rather by faith than by sight. He himself, dealing with Gentiles of every stripe, was an able exponent of the same faith.

II

St. Paul the Orator. In thinking of St. Paul as the writer of the letters that bear his name, we are too apt to ignore the main literary activity to which he gave his life. After his conversion, as soon as he became fully aware of "that for which he was laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii, 12), he became a traveling preacher and teacher; making it his life's business to interest men in his Christian message, to plant and organize churches, and to exercise a founder's care over them until they were well enough manned and indoctrinated to maintain themselves. In this work he showed a masterly generalship by choosing important strategic points or centers of influence: residing for various periods of time, sometimes amounting to years, and later repeating his visits, in such cities as Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus; not to omit Cæsarea and Rome, in both of which cities he, though a prisoner, had much freedom of intercourse with the world and earned the recognition accorded to a man of intellectual and spiritual power (cf. Acts xxiv, 25, 26; xxviii, 30, 31). In all this extraordinarily active life he made his way and achieved success by public speaking, that is, as a powerful and persuasive orator.

His Manner of Speaking

St. Paul himself, it would seem, set no great store either by the impressiveness of his personal presence (cf. 2 Cor. x, 10) or by the eloquence of his public speech (cf. 1 Cor. ii, 1, 4). He was inclined rather to attribute the undeniably marvelous effects of his preaching to the intrinsic power of his theme. But there are good reasons for a less deprecatory estimate. To quote from the Reverend Maurice Jones: "If the power to produce striking effects, and a marvelous facility of adapting himself to every class of hearer and to every variety of conditions, be the marks of a true orator, we are bound to confess that the Apostle possessed them in no small degree. . . . The effect of his

first recorded sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, which brought the whole city to listen to him on the following Sabbath (Acts xiii, 44); the burning eloquence which filled the conscience-stricken Felix with fear and awe (Acts xxiv, 25); the impassioned oratory which moved Festus to exclaim that he was mad (Acts xxvi, 24); the persuasiveness which fascinated and kept quiet a howling mob of Jews thirsting for his life (Acts xxii, 2), — all these tell the same tale, and assure us that among the many and outstanding gifts possessed by the Apostle, that of speech was not the least. High Roman officials, Jewish kings, crowds of heathen, whether among the *dilettanti* of Athens or the peasants of Lystra, all acknowledge the power of that magic voice. . . . To the unlettered crowd at Lystra there was but one name which could do justice to the brilliancy of his eloquence, that of Mercury, the herald of the gods"[1] (Acts xiv, 12).

Notes of Speeches Preserved

The reports of St. Paul's public addresses are all from the pen of St. Luke, the writer of the Acts, who was for several years the intimate friend and traveling companion of the apostle. Some of these speeches, it is not to be doubted, he himself heard. For others he must depend on report, or perhaps procure an account of them from the apostle himself. As reported to us they are all brief, and doubtless comprise in each case only the gist or main course of what was said; and much of the wealth of color, illustration, and impassioned appeal can be only meagerly reproduced. Enough is preserved, however, to show the wonderful tact with which the apostle adapted himself to every audience and occasion; the variety of appeal that he made to very different classes of people; yet withal the absolute singleness and sincerity of purpose which drove him in each case straight to his point, with oratorical skill yet quite without the tricks or sophistry of the rhetorician. His absorbing sense of the power of his theme (cf. 1 Cor. ix, 16)

[1] Jones, "St. Paul the Orator," p. 1.

is what gives power, unity, and eloquence to all his work. He himself describes this in 1 Cor. ix, 19–27, illustrating his singleness of aim by a figure taken from athletics: "I therefore so run as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air."

NOTE. *List of St. Paul's Speeches.* Of St. Paul's reported speeches, "six are longer and more noteworthy than the rest";[1] and they present such a variety of treatment and occasion that we naturally conclude them to have been selected by St. Luke as broadly typical of the main aspects of his work. They are:

1. The speech at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts xiii, given before an audience of his own nation, in a synagogue.

2. The speech at Athens, Acts xvii, given before an audience of Greek philosophers.

3. The speech at Miletus, Acts xx, given as a farewell address to a Christian audience.

4. The speech at Jerusalem, Acts xxii, given to a Jewish hostile mob; an *apologia pro vita sua.*

5. The speech before Felix, Acts xxiv, given as a defense before a Roman tribunal.

6. The speech before King Agrippa, Acts xxvi, given on an occasion of great pomp before a Jewish king and a Roman procurator.

To these main addresses may be added: brief notes of speeches to an unlettered crowd at Lystra (Acts xiv, 15–17); to the Sanhedrim in Jerusalem (Acts xxiii, 1–6); and to the Jews at Rome, soon after his arrival there as a prisoner (Acts xxviii, 17–28).

Thus, not only in variety of audience and occasion as represented in St. Luke's reports, but "we have records of his addresses at the great centres of imperial and provincial life. . . . The selection of speeches, although exceedingly limited in quantity, is by the variety and comprehensiveness of its contents, of the greatest importance, and redounds, in no small degree, to the credit of the author of the Acts as a historian of high rank" (Jones, p. 5).

In estimating St. Paul's speeches we must bear in mind that we do not have them immediately from him, but from St. Luke, who in reporting them may supposably have impressed something of his own style upon them. We have

[1] For this list and remarks thereon, see Gardiner, in "Cambridge Biblical Essays," and Jones, "St. Paul the Orator."

to bear in mind also the conventional method of ancient historians, whose custom was to compose speeches and put them in the mouths of their characters. St. Luke's close conversance with St. Paul's mind, however, would remove the necessity of much invention of speeches; besides, he was the actual hearer of some of them.

Bearing on the Epistles

Beyond this, however, there is a close analogy between the speeches and the epistle. Not only are the lines of thought as much alike as the variety of occasion would permit, but the epistles themselves, in the glow and impetuosity of their style, in the close grip, as it were, of a man with an audience, and in their intimate personal tone, are like public speech reduced to writing. In the direct and incisive way of marshaling his thoughts, too, St. Paul's mind was eminently oratorical. The chosen occasion of his epistles was always like that of a pastor conversing with his people. In such a literary medium it was, accordingly, familiar yet impassioned, that he gave his great Christian message to the ages.

III

Letters of the Active Missionary. If we would trace the development of St. Paul's thought through his epistles, we must take them not in the order in which they occur in the New Testament but in that which a careful study of their thought and occasion reveals as chronological. This order can be ascertained without much uncertainty, except in the relative order of one or two of the shorter ones.

The development of thought which this study reveals may be traced in the large in two stages. These may be defined somehow thus: The gospel which St. Paul has in charge is indeed universal, not to be monopolized by any race or class (cf. Rom. i, 14, 16). But it has its roots in Jewish ways of thinking, inherited from an ancient history and literature, and in its branches in ways of thinking which Gentiles cannot understand without first being educated in

Jewish presuppositions. Hence the great effort of St. Paul's first period, while the letters he wrote were those of the active missionary, was so to reckon with the roots of his belief, his inherited Jewish ideas, as to retain all their essential values yet translate them, so to say, into the Gentile or rather the universal currency of thinking.

The Epistles of the First Period

The epistles of St. Paul's first period comprise those which he wrote while he was a busy traveling evangelist, planting new churches and watching over those already planted. The period ends with his arrest at Jerusalem and the beginning of his two years' imprisonment in Cæsarea (Acts xxiii, 35; xxiv, 27).

It must not be supposed that these were all the letters he wrote. From the fact that in one letter he warns his readers against forgeries (2 Thess. ii, 2) and tells them how to identify a genuine letter of his (2 Thess. iii, 17), it would seem that his correspondence was extensive enough to be prized. In another letter he refers to an epistle now lost (1 Cor. v, 9). The letters that we have are doubtless those that were felt to be of cardinal importance for the instruction of the churches. They rise, however, out of concrete situations and adapt themselves to particular emergencies; they are applications of Christian wisdom and exposition to the religious and social affairs of life.

In their most probable chronological order, these epistles of the first period are:[1]

First Thessalonians, written from Corinth A.D. 52 to a newly established church (Robertson, p. 167). It recognizes essentially the primitive Christian doctrine.

Second Thessalonians, written soon after, partly to correct certain misconceptions of the teaching of the first letter.

First Corinthians, written from Ephesus A.D. 57 (or 56), to discuss some grave problems which had risen in the church at

[1] The order and the dates here given follow Robertson, "Epochs in the Life of Paul" (New York, 1909).

Corinth. It contains some of the main elements of St. Paul's gospel, notably about the resurrection and about the specific gifts of the Spirit (Robertson, p. 189).

Second Corinthians, written from Ephesus perhaps a year or two after; an intensely personal letter, written partly to mitigate the severity of an intervening letter now lost (2 Cor. ii, 4), and partly to prepare the readers' minds for a contemplated visit to them, in which he may have to say sharp things (xii, 14; xiii, 10). It contains some remarkable accounts of Paul's personal experiences both of hardship (xi, 21–33) and of unusual spiritual revelations (xii, 1–10).

Galatians, written at some time in these active years, but giving no certain clue of time or place, with the object to maintain his apostolic authority and the truth of his message, to a church which under the influence of Judaizing meddlers is in danger of deserting the freedom and purity of its faith. It is perhaps the most impassioned of St. Paul's epistles.

Romans, written from Ephesus A.D. 57 (Robertson, p. 206): the first of his epistles written to a church which he had not established nor seen, though it announces his purpose of visiting them soon (xv, 24). It is written in his matured consciousness of being the recognized teacher and leader of all the Gentile churches, and contains in the most systematic form the doctrinal substance of his gospel. In this respect it is as truly a treatise as an epistle, though not expressed in such rigid and academic terms as one associates with a treatise. It is from a somewhat narrow interpretation of Romans, especially, that the one-sided Puritan theology has been deduced; no blame, however, to the epistle itself, only to myopic views of it.

Two Lines of Transformed Jewish Ideas

To St. Paul, as a thoroughly trained scholar, all the lines of Jewish thought and ideal met and culminated in his gospel of Jesus Christ. We cannot touch upon these here with any fullness of treatment. Two main lines may be noted, however, as typical of the way in which the ancient Jewish thought was transformed, through the apostle's mind, into a living and working principle of life.

1. "Because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (Acts xxviii, 20), St. Paul said to the chief personages of his nation whom he met when as a prisoner he arrived at Rome. From his Judaistic consciousness he inherited in pure intensity what has been called "the habitual expectancy of the Jewish race." Beyond all other religions theirs had been a prophetic religion. They looked forward confidently to a kingdom of heaven, and to a Messiah as universal king. But as Jews their idea had been ethnic and exclusive: they deemed that this kingdom would mean *their* dominance of the nations, and that their Messiah, while their race's king, would be the other nations' despot. The Christians had learned more hospitable and fraternal things. In becoming a Christian St. Paul merely took up this expectation as it was in process of enlargement in the new Christian sect, and became the principal factor in translating it into universal terms. He joined with that sect (cf. Acts xxiv, 14–16) in recognizing that the candidate for Messiahship, Jesus of Nazareth, had already completed his preliminary ministry, and in his death and resurrection had revealed the lines on which the kingdom of heaven was to be perfected among men. Jesus Christ reigned even now as unseen Lord of his faithful subjects, Jews and Greeks alike; he was "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i, 24); his will and spirit were the principle of a new life in all who believed; and he was destined to come again and gather his subjects to himself.

It was in this form that the Jewish apocalyptic idea of the coming judgment and the end of the age presented itself to the primitive Christians. St. Paul entered heartily into the idea, emphasizing it in his preaching and writing (1 Thess. iv, 13–17). In his earliest extant epistle — First Thessalonians — the coming of Christ as fully established Messiah is regarded as very near, as due, indeed, in that generation, though no definite date could be set for it. In Second

Thessalonians he corrects some errors of faith and conduct which this expectation had engendered, and virtually postpones the parousia until first the "man of sin" (2 Thess. ii, 2–4), typifying the worldly power of evil and denial, is met and vanquished. The older Jewish imagery still clung to his mind, however; and in the next epistle, First Corinthians, the coming parousia is conceived in spectacular terms (1 Cor. xv, 51, 52), with sound of trumpet and sudden transformation of bodily conditions; still regarded, too, as due in that generation. It takes time to translate one's imagination from apocalyptic to actual.

This apocalyptic imagery, however, was a feature of the time and of racial imagination. As it came more and more in contact with the more abstract and logical Gentile conceptions it was destined to fall away, or rather to pass from the visual to the spiritual, and from an expectation to a present realized condition. There are not wanting indications that St. Paul himself gradually relinquished it, while still retaining all its permanent values for humanity in general.

2. From his Jewish race and religion St. Paul inherited what may be called a passion for perfection, such as no other religious ideal could show. It was this passion which underlay the undeniably good elements of Pharisaism. As a Pharisee he had been exceedingly zealous to keep the Mosaic law perfectly; as a Pharisee, too, he had longed so to live as to attain to the resurrection from the dead (cf. Acts xxiii, 6). But with his conversion to Christianity these ideals, though still equally charged with passion, underwent a rapid and radical transformation. As for the law, which he had come to regard not as mere Mosaic precept but as the essential law of his being, he became aware that he could not keep it; that it was too absolute for any man to keep, there being a law of sin in his members like a dead weight dragging him down. He describes this in the celebrated

passage, Romans vii, in which the bondage of the natural man is owned and deplored. But over against this failure he sets his Christian resource: a new energy of life within, which he calls "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii, 2), and in its practical beneficence "the law of Christ" (Gal. vi, 2). This law, in its relation to conduct, he identifies with the spirit of love, saying, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; love therefore is the fulfilment of the law" (Rom. xiii, 10).

The sense of "freedom from the law of sin and death" thus engendered transforms all his Jewish heritage of austere law and guilty conscience into the sense of a new power and peace in his personality, which he identifies with the presence of the Holy Spirit; and this, being the spirit of Christ, carries with it the guaranty of resurrection through the might of Him who rose again. Thus his severest Pharisaic ideals are at once corrected and more than realized. All the epistles of this period are occupied with various phases, expressed in great vigor and enthusiasm of language, of this transformation of Jewish ideas, through Christianity, into the universal idiom for mankind.

IV

Letters of the Roman Prisoner. Until by imprisonment St. Paul was laid aside from the active work of a traveling evangelist and organizer, he seems to have had mainly in mind the adjustment of ideas inherited from Jewish sources to the uses of the Christian world in general. The Epistle to the Romans, the latest written letter of the first period, is the one in which this adjustment is most fully made.

In the letters written from his prison in Rome, however, we discern a new background for his instruction. He accommodates himself in a marked degree to the thought native to the Gentiles themselves; which thought contains elements derived from Greek philosophy, Oriental mysticism, and the

various conceptions developed among the heterogeneous populations of Asia Minor. Here again he is hospitable and tolerant; we have seen his attitude in his speech at Athens (Acts xvii, 22–31). His object is not to introduce an entirely alien way of thinking but to direct whatever is good to a lucid Christian solution, and to correct the errors and corruptions that inhere in the various systems. Thus we may regard his work in this period as the Christianizing of the world's inherited thinking, especially of that thinking which inheres with life and conduct.

The Epistles of the Second Period

St. Paul's removal from an active life of travel and preaching began with his arrest in Jerusalem; whence he was taken to Cæsarea, the residence of the procurator, and there detained two years awaiting trial (Acts xxiv, 27). On appealing to Cæsar he was taken to Rome, where again he was a prisoner for two whole years before his case came before the Emperor's court (Acts xxviii, 30). In both places his imprisonment was a comparatively easy one (cf. Acts xxiv, 23; xxviii, 30, 31), in which he could be attended by friends, and through them could communicate with the various churches under his care.

It was from his Roman imprisonment that the most important of these later epistles were written. The account of his career as given in the Acts ends with this first Roman residence, and for further information about him we have to rely on statements and allusions in the epistles themselves. When at length his case came to trial he was acquitted, and had then a period of liberty, during which he made some visits among the Macedonian and perhaps the Asian churches. Then came a second arrest and imprisonment in Rome, followed by his martyrdom, concerning which latter we have only tradition of uncertain authority to guide us. A group of later epistles, addressed not to churches but to individuals, dates from this last period of release and the last imprisonment.

The following are the epistles of St. Paul's prison period:

Philippians, written to the church that has had the friendliest relations with him, at a time when he finds that even in prison his efforts to witness to the truth of Christ are working to the furtherance of the good cause (Phil. i, 12–24). Full of joy and good cheer, it is perhaps the most charming of St. Paul's epistles.

Colossians, written to correct an incipient heresy which is creeping into the church at Colosse: a disturbing philosophy and mysticism which is confusing the faith of the churches and tending to destroy their unity and equality in Christ.

Philemon, a letter intrusted for delivery to a runaway slave, Onesimus, whom St. Paul has met and converted, and is now sending back to his owner in Colosse, recommending his reinstatement as no longer a menial but a Christian brother (cf. Col. iv, 9). The letter breathes a rare grace of the Christian spirit and the nobility of the true gentleman.

Ephesians, sent as a circular letter to the churches of the region about Colosse, and dealing in a less controversial way with much the same tendencies noted in the Epistle to the Colossians. The words "in Ephesus" are missing from the address in the two most ancient manuscripts (*Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*); and many suppose that it was so left that the name of the particular church might be copied in, and that thus the letter might be transcribed and sent on or exchanged; as is, indeed, suggested in Col. iv, 16, where a letter to the Laodiceans, by some identified with this epistle, is mentioned.

First Timothy and *Titus*, written during St. Paul's period of release, to counsel and encourage the persons named, who were pastors in Ephesus and Crete respectively, and the apostle's most beloved helpers. Full of wise counsel both personal and communal.

Second Timothy, written from his last imprisonment, when the aged apostle, resigned and peaceful, feels that his life of strenuous activity is over and that death is near. The letter is full of practical wisdom and good sense.

It is to the epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians, especially, that we must look for St. Paul's most matured

and finished Christian thinking. They were written at a time when his gospel had been introduced into all the world (Col. i, 6, 23) as a working and vitalizing power. The time would seem to have come, therefore, for a final and rounded summary of this message of truth, suited alike to Gentiles and Jews, and in forms which should utilize Greek habits of thought as well as Jewish.

Two Lines of Matured Christian Thought

The occasion of these letters was the report of a tendency in the church at Colosse to desert the simplicity of their faith and become involved in the confused and mystic philosophies of which Asia Minor was full. With his letter to this church he sent also another letter intended for all the churches of the region, and setting forth the same ideas in rather more systematic and less controversial terms — the letter which we now know as the Epistle to the Ephesians.[1] Both letters are rather more involved and difficult in style than his earlier ones, owing partly to the more abstruse philosophies which it was his aim to correct and simplify, and partly to the apostle's vehemence in setting forth a vividly realized truth. Both letters reveal, too, the supreme subject of St. Paul's meditation during this period of enforced leisure. It was the person of Christ: his unique rank in creation (cf. Col. i, 15, 16) and his unique value for the believer's life; or, as he expresses the whole idea, "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii, 8). In the exposition of this subject he reaches a height far beyond what his Jewish thinking has given him data for.

In two main lines we may trace this matter of St. Paul's later thinking and its advance on his earlier.

1. We have seen how, in pursuance of the Jewish expectation of a coming kingdom and world-judgment, he viewed Jesus as the risen and ascended Lord under whose spiritual direction men were now living, in the belief that he would

[1] See note on Ephesians, p. 630.

soon come again in person as the fully enthroned Messiah. This is essentially the view of the primitive church, when it first started as a Jewish sect. St. Paul's later thought of Christ, however, is of a Being far more intimately related to creation and manhood; a Being described as "the first-born of all creation" (Col. i, 15), through whom all things are created, to whom all ranks of being owe their life, and in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii, 9). Of all things in heaven and earth Christ is the Head and Chief. This the apostle squarely maintains, going so far, indeed, as to call him "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i, 15), without actually calling him Deity.

He is led to declare this view by the fact that the churches to whom he is writing are speculating on an elaborate philosophy of creation in which Christ is virtually lost in a host of spiritual beings, rank over rank, between man and God. The word "fullness" (*plerōma*), which he uses of Christ, is one of the current terms of this philosophy, which he thus defines and adapts. He is encountering the earlier stage of a philosophy which later caused much confusion in the church under the name of gnosticism. St. Paul's object in thus dealing with it is not so much to deny or oppose it as so to simplify the terms of the Christian faith that men's speculations may not dissipate it in a mystic cloudland of theory. He warns the Colossians against worshiping a hierarchy of angels (Col. ii, 18), without holding the Head of all, who alone is worthy of their homage (cf. Eph. vi, 12).

2. We have seen how St. Paul, in writing to those who have been Jews, struggles with the sense of sin and a broken law, and views Christ as a Saviour who atones and insures the resurrection from death. In these latter epistles, however, he views Christ not merely as an atoning Sacrifice or as a Lord working over and for us, but as an energizing Spirit within. Christ is really, in the last analysis, our own manhood made complete. We are related to him, therefore,

as members of the human body are related to the head from which they receive wisdom and direction (Eph. iv, 12; Col. ii, 19; cf. 1 Cor. xii, 12–18). And so there is scope for all the varieties of function which men of different talents and temperaments may be fitted for; while deeply underneath they are in entire spiritual harmony through their Head, making up one solidarity of manhood, which can be gauged by nothing short of "a fullgrown man," according to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv, 13).

This he calls "the mystery, . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i, 27); using the term "mystery" as it is familiar to Greek minds (cf. Eph. iii, 3; vi, 19), from the Eleusinian and other mysteries of their religion. Christianity also has its esoteric element, its mystery; but its distinction is that what has long been hidden and occult is now revealed (Col. i, 26); a mystery whose secret may become the possession of all men who will accept it.

III. From Jewish to Christian Idiom

We have noted how St. Paul, in his great work with the Gentiles, translated his inherited Jewish ideas into Christian values for their sakes, and how at a later stage he did a similar service to them in their Greek ways of thinking. In this kind of work he was not alone, nor was it for Gentiles only that such transformation of Jewish ideas had to be made. For believers also whose antecedents were Jewish, and whose literary heritage had been, as it still was, only the Old Testament, an important duty of the early Christian writers was to expound Old Testament usages, types, symbols, and principles in the light of the new Christian faith, or, as here expressed, to make transition from Jewish to Christian idiom. This was done in order to make the great body of the sacred literature available for present and permanent uses. It is thus expressed by St. Paul: "For whatsoever things were

written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. xv, 4).

Several prominent epistles, addressed not to particular churches or individuals but to the Christian world in general, embody this endeavor.

I

Hebrews, and the Fulfillment of Types. It may be noted that the quoted passages in the gospels, the Acts, and St. Paul's epistles are detached passages taken mostly from the Psalms and the Prophets. These parts of Scripture, as being probably those in most familiar use, are also copiously drawn upon in the Epistle to the Hebrews; which, indeed, is fuller of quotations and allusions than any other Scripture book.

Beyond this, however, and as its most distinctive trait, the epistle founds itself on a whole line of the old literature. That line is the one with which every Jew is familiar; the one, indeed, by which he sets the most store. It is the line which embodies the Mosaic law, the ritual services of the Temple, and the providentially ordered course of history. The writer's aim is to show that the distinctive ideas underlying the Hebrew history and worship — ideas of the ministry of angels, of the rest in the promised land as secured by Moses and Joshua, of the high-priesthood with its duties, of the most holy place, of the whole system of ritual and sacrifice — are merely types and symbols of something to come and, therefore, in themselves unfinal. The perfect fulfillment and clarifier of all these is Christ, who is superior to men and angels and the Mediator of a new covenant. In him is the manhood rest and home after which men of faith aspired through all the dim ages before him. Of these ancient worthies a notable bead-roll is given in the eleventh chapter; men of faith and sturdy energy of whom it is said: "They that say such things make it manifest that they are

seeking after a country of their own" (Heb. xi, 14), and yet that they "received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (xi, 39, 40).

The epistle is thus a masterly résumé and interpretation of the Jewish religious and traditional system, considered as an adumbration of (cf. x, 1) and preparation for Christianity.

Origin and Aim

The Epistle to the Hebrews is evidently intended primarily for some Christian community whose members are imbued with Jewish ideas, and perhaps living in daily contact with the legal customs of the Old Testament. No community is so fitted to answer these conditions as the church at Jerusalem, the mother church, as it existed before the destruction of the city and the Temple A.D. 70. Of this church the "great three" apostles, Peter and John and James (the last named the brother of Jesus), were the leaders, but as it would seem in the larger capacity of general directors and overseers, and not of men of letters. Besides their leadership there would be needed for the church, especially in its representative and standard-giving capacity, such educative training in their literature as a treatise like this could give, and notably to those who had not seen Jesus but had heard of him from those who had known him (cf. Heb. ii, 3).

The epistle was not written, as the Authorized Version assumes,[1] by St. Paul. It is in a style and line of thinking quite different from his, though it is so truly in harmony with his ideas that he may well have had some connection with the production of it, perhaps as counselor and adviser. The likeliest account of its origin, as seems to me, is that of Professor Ramsay[2], who believes that it was written from Cæsarea, where Philip the Evangelist lived (Acts xxi, 8), and that its date of composition was A.D. 59, toward the end

[1] See title of the epistle in the King James (Authorized) Version.

[2] Ramsay, "Luke the Physician," pp. 301 ff.

of the procuratorship of Felix, while St. Paul was a state prisoner there. If this was so, the writer may have been Philip himself, who, one of the original seven deacons, became an evangelist and teacher to the Christians in Samaria and other parts who had been Jews (Acts vi, 5 ; viii, 5–8, 26, 40).

NOTE. *The Authorship.* Other ideas of its authorship have been advocated: that it was written by Apollos, by Barnabas, by Priscilla (Harnack's idea); but these, like the idea here adopted, are all conjectural. The authorship is a secondary matter. The fact remains that the epistle is one of the most valuable documents of the early Christianity, supplying an element without which the New Testament literature, as a rounded and finished whole, would seem distinctly poorer.

II

James, and the Wisdom from Above. The Epistle of James was written for Christians in all places who had been Jews; being addressed "to the twelve tribes which are of the dispersion" (James i, 1). Its author was not James the son of Zebedee, who was put to death A.D. 44 by Herod (Acts xii, 2); nor James the son of Alphæus (= James the less), of whom nothing is recorded (cf. Matt. x, 3 ; Mark xv, 40); but James the brother of Jesus, who was not one of the original apostles, but became a believer after his brother's resurrection, and later was the primate of the church in Jerusalem. As such, he was in the fitting position to write such an encyclical letter as this purports to be, made up as it is of practical counsels and precepts for the Christian's daily living; not scholarly and theological, but as it were a manual of Christian common-sense.

Its Distinctive Interest

As Hebrews has illuminated and applied the historical and ritual strain in the ancient literature, this Epistle of James follows into riper significance the strain of Wisdom, as represented in such books as Proverbs and Job. There is the same clearness and terseness of phrase; the same use of familiar figures and analogies;

the same purpose of giving counsel for the practical relations of life and society. Its tone is that of the Wisdom literature. It defines the uses of trial, the virtue of steadfastness and sincerity, the real spirit of practical religion, the law of Christian liberty, the unity before God of high and humble, rich and poor, the Christian control of the tongue, and many more such things, — all genuine Wisdom principles made Christlike. Highest of all, it inculcates, as in fundamental contrast to earthly wisdom, "the wisdom that is from above," which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without fickleness, without hypocrisy" (iii, 13–17). It takes the values of Hebrew Wisdom, as James knew them through their favorite Scripture utterances, and raises them to their matured Christian power.[1]

Its Cultural Source

An immense literary interest attaches to this epistle, considered as the work of James the brother of our Lord. James was not with his greater brother during the latter's Messianic ministry, but the boyhood and young manhood of the two must have been passed together during much of the thirty years before Jesus entered upon his public work. The epistle doubtless draws many things from the store of ideas common to the two during their early life in Nazareth. A similar cast of ideas is apparent in the utterances of the brothers. The Epistle of James is remarkably parallel, or at least analogous, in many places, both in its use of illustrative figures and in its interpretations of truth, to the Sermon on the Mount, which comes from Jesus' initial teaching, and to the parables and conversations which reflect his personal method. Thus it embodies much of the line of practical truth with which Jesus' mind was conversant before he became known to his nation through his public utterances.

[1] See Genung, "The Hebrew Literature of Wisdom in the Light of To-day," Chapter VIII.

It is just the sane practical guidance of this kind that James here gives for the community of Christian brethren, "the twelve tribes of the dispersion," who have supplemented their truest Judaism by committing themselves to the wisdom of Christ. As St. Paul the scholar, with his wonderful insight into the mind of Jew and Greek, has mirrored the theological and Christological values; as the author of Hebrews, imbued with the ancient historic and symbolic lore, has taken this as it was ready to die (cf. Heb. viii, 13) and fixed it upon its permanent antitype: so James, trained in the sound sense of the Nazareth home, has translated "the breath and finer spirit" of wisdom into Christian values, which every common man, whether scholar or not, may understand and live by.

III

Epistles from Jesus' Personal Circle. Besides these epistles of Hebrews and James, which draw their thoughts largely from the transformed Old Testament values, there are two general epistles from St. Peter, the chief of the apostles, and one from Jude, "the brother of James" (Jude 1), and so of Jesus. These, while aware of the Old Testament stores of truth, address themselves more particularly to the current hopes and perils of the Christian cause and the tendencies which, as it goes on to later conditions, that cause is developing.

The First Epistle of Peter

St. Peter's first epistle, written from Rome (which city he names Babylon, v, 13, according to a custom of the early Christians), is much in the manner of St. Paul's pastoral letters, counseling the Christian "sojourners of the dispersion" (i, 1) in their everyday domestic relations — servants, wives, husbands — to live worthily of their priceless hope, as good citizens and pure-minded men

conscious of the wonderful redemption that is theirs, and waiting patiently for the coming of Christ. The apostle writes in the shadow of approaching trials and persecutions which are to befall the Christian community; and he is especially concerned that in the spirit of their Master they shall suffer not as evildoers but as righteous and inoffensive men (ii, 15, 19, 20; iii, 17; iv, 14–16), so vindicating a Christian character under such conditions as befell their Lord.

Though evidently well on in age, and in a position of authority, St. Peter writes to the elders of the churches as a "fellow-elder" (v, 1), putting himself by the side of them. The whole epistle shows in a notable way how the ministry and teachings of Jesus ripened in the heart of his most headstrong disciple into a beauty of steadfastness and suffering for righteousness' sake, which spirit he inculcates as the church's divine power against the wickedness and corruptions of the world. The Master's prayer for him before his denial that his "faith fail not" (Luke xxii, 31, 32) was abundantly answered. No other epistle in the Bible is so direct a reflection of the life and words of the Master.

The Second Epistle of Peter

St. Peter's second epistle, which, because it is so different in style and spirit from the first, many deny to him, is written when more troublous times have come upon the church, not only from without in the shape of persecutions but from within in the shape of false teachings, hurtful philosophies, and skepticism. The church is evidently coming into contact with the wave of gnostic intellectualism and lawless materialism which began to invade it in the latter part of the first century. Belief in the parousia was coming to be scoffed at by those who could not interpret it in spiritual terms; and the writer must needs remind them that dates for such an event cannot be set, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and that the event will come suddenly, apocalyptically, and without

observation. The intuition of the epistle is thus upon the verge of the apocalyptic disclosure soon to come in the Revelation of John[1] (2 Pet. iii, 8–10; cf. Isa. lv, 11).

The epistle purports to be a product of St. Peter's old age, when he is expecting soon to "strike his tent" (2 Pet. i, 13–15), and is arranging to leave such a remembrance of Jesus after his "decease" (2 Pet. i, 15; cf. Luke ix, 31) as shall be of needed service to the Christian world. It commends its readers also to the epistles of St. Paul (2 Pet. iii, 15, 16), whose wisdom, difficult to understand but harmonious with the other Christian teachings, is set beside the other scriptures as authoritative and weighty for instruction.

The Epistle of Jude

St. Jude, who calls himself "a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James" (i, 1), was, like James, not one of the original apostles, but a later convert. He writes to Christians who are in dangers similar to those described in Second Peter, urging them "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The danger which he confronts, however, presents itself not so much in the form of heresy and false doctrine as of impurity of life, — the unspeakable animalism and greed against which the early church had so strenuously to contend in a heathen world. He shows himself a competent student of Scripture, not only of the accredited Old Testament writings but also of the apocalyptic writings which in the first century were so popular. He refers in one place to things mentioned in Daniel's visions and other works (Jude 9; cf. Dan. x, 13, 21; xii, 1), and in another to the Book of Enoch (Jude 14; cf. Enoch i, 9).

The doxology with which the epistle closes (vss. 24, 25) is justly regarded as one of the most beautiful ascriptions to be found in its whole class of literature. It is a fitting end to the epistolary part of the New Testament canon.

[1] See below, p. 664.

IV. The Legacy of the Beloved Disciple

In our consideration of the gospels as completed, it will be remembered that we confined ourselves to the synoptic gospels, reserving the fourth gospel to what was deemed its more fitting place in the literature of values. We now take up this gospel, with other writings of the same author, considering them as an old-age legacy of one who was an intimate disciple of Jesus; a legacy which, coming to men at a time when their spiritual need of it was greatest, may be regarded as the crown and culmination of the literature both of fact and of values. The writings of the beloved disciple are at once the simplest, the directest, and the profoundest in the whole range of Biblical literature. They consist of the fourth gospel, written as an eye-witness and ear-witness testimony, and three epistles, the first of which latter, being a kind of appendix to the gospel, has been aptly called the "Postscript Commendatory."[1]

I

Who was the Beloved Disciple? "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true" (John xxi, 24). Thus is worded a certificate of authenticity attached to the end of the fourth gospel; and the disciple thus referred to is repeatedly called "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John xiii, 23; xix, 26; xx, 2, 3; xxi, 7, 20). He is nowhere mentioned by name; but in 2 John 1 and 3 John 1, which were written by the same person who wrote the gospel, he calls himself "the elder," and in the first epistle writes in the manner of a very old and revered man (cf. 1 John ii, 1, 12, 13, 18). The certificate speaks of him as still living and bearing witness, and yet as having written "these things" (namely, in the gospel). It seems most probable therefore that this

[1] By Bishop Lightfoot.

voucher was given after the gospel was written and before the first epistle. It is evidently the author himself who wishes his name withheld, and though his name and claims are well known his wish is respected.

Who this author was has of late years been vigorously called in question; and this question, with accompanying problems of age and circumstances of writing, has made the so-called Johannine problem one of the most vexed enigmas of modern criticism. Let us consider what data we have for forming an opinion: data of tradition and of the Bible itself.

1. Tradition has held since the last quarter of the second century that the author so obscurely referred to was John, one of the original twelve apostles; and accordingly the gospel and the epistles have come down to us with his name. Some facts of John's life make the ascription natural. John, the son of Zebedee, from some place on the Sea of Galilee, probably Bethsaida, was one of the earliest of Jesus' disciples (cf. Mark i, 19, for his call). His father, who carried on the fisher's trade, seems to have been a man in well-to-do circumstances (cf. Mark i, 20, "hired servants"). His mother, who is most probably identified with Salome (cf. Matt. xxvii, 56, and Mark xv, 40, with John xix, 25), seems to have been the sister of Jesus' mother; hence John and Jesus were first cousins. If so, John was also a kinsman of John the Baptist (cf. Luke i, 36); but whether he was ever a disciple of the Baptist is uncertain; our identification of the unnamed disciple in John i, 40, is all we have to go by. He was a younger brother of James; and the three, James and John and Peter, were the most intimate of Jesus' disciples. These were the ones chosen to witness the most solemn events of the Master's ministry: the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark v, 37), the transfiguration (Luke ix, 28), and the midnight prayer in Gethsemane (Mark xiv, 33). Whenever John is mentioned he is associated with others, with James or Peter or both. Only one remark is recorded

of him alone, when the Master corrects his mistaken zeal in forbidding the casting out of demons by one who is not a disciple (Mark ix, 38; Luke ix, 49). It is much the same when, after Jesus' ascension, he becomes one of the chief apostles. He and Peter begin the Jerusalem ministry together (Acts iii, iv); but Peter is always the speaker and man of action, while John is the companion. The two brothers James and John were surnamed Boanerges by Jesus, that is, "sons of thunder" (Mark iii, 17), perhaps from their impetuous and vehement temperament, in which they seemed to be alike. That they had political ambitions is indicated by their request for high distinctions in the coming kingdom (Mark x, 35–37, but perhaps the original idea was their mother's; see Matt. xx, 20–21). These items are all that are given us of John the son of Zebedee, except by tradition. Whether the John of the Apocalypse (Rev. i, 1, 4, 9) is the same person is quite conjectural.

2. Other circumstances there are, however, about this mysterious "disciple whom Jesus loved," which make his identification with John uncertain. To enumerate all these is of course not in place here. He is first mentioned, as if introduced as a new member of the circle, in John xiii, 23, where his intimacy with Jesus is indicated by the circumstance of his reclining on Jesus' breast at table, the same circumstance being used again as his identifying token (xxi, 20) when he is last mentioned. This would seem a rather strange way of introducing one who had been a prominent member of the circle from the beginning. It was to this disciple that Jesus on the cross committed the care of his mother (xix, 26); and the fact that "from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home" (vs. 27) would indicate that his home was in or near Jerusalem, whereas John's, on the Sea of Galilee, was ninety miles away. The fact that he was known to the high priest and procured admission for Peter to the court (xviii, 16), which it is hard to say of the

Galilean John, is another indication in the same direction; to which may be added that the whole gospel written by this disciple deals more with events in Judea than in Galilee. Finally we may note that when, at Jesus' arrest in the garden, the recognized band of disciples, perhaps at Jesus' request (cf. John xviii, 8), forsook him and fled (Matt. xxvi, 56), though Peter afterwards "followed him afar off" (Matt. xxvi, 58), this disciple alone remained with his Master till the end and saw the piercing of his side with the spear (John xix, 35; cf. 1 John v, 6). It is impossible, with the data we have, to trace these circumstances to John the son of Zebedee; though, to be sure, they are not conclusive against him.

Grounds for a New Surmise

As the case for the John of tradition is felt to be less decisive, the field is left more open for surmise, if plausible data are forthcoming, as to who the beloved disciple really was. A circumstance of considerable weight seems to the present writer to make for the identification with a person to whom hitherto little attention has been paid. It will have been noted that "the disciple who wrote these things" does not mention himself as the beloved of Jesus until he narrates the events of the last supper. In giving the account of the raising of Lazarus, a few days before, he adduces testimony from the sisters (John xi, 3), from the Jews (vs. 36), and from himself (vs. 5), to the exceptional love of Jesus for Lazarus; a fact the more remarkable because only one other case is mentioned, and this only casual, where Jesus is represented as bestowing individual love (Mark x, 21). If, acting on this clue, we postulate Lazarus of Bethany as the author of the fourth gospel, many things, such as his residence at or near Jerusalem, his services to the Galileans when they were there, his acquaintance with leading Jews of the capital and their ways, and his predominant attention to the events of the Judean ministry, are naturally and lucidly explained.

We could add data, and especially a general tone of consciousness, of a more mystic sort, suitable to one who, having been recalled from death, had thenceforth a new attitude toward the unseen; such as the curious notion among his friends that he would never die (John xxi, 23), and his uniform treatment, both in gospel and epistle, of eternal life as a present thing. Further considerations, however, for or against, may be left to the more intuitive and spiritually minded thinker, to whom their weight and reality can best appeal.[1]

II

The Story Told Once More. It was in the old age of the Beloved Disciple, when the facts of Jesus' ministry would be recalled from two generations of time, and when a long period of matured reflection and interpretation intervened, that the world received the fourth gospel, the profoundest and yet simplest account of Jesus' personality and work that there is in existence. This lateness of date does not make against its authenticity as a record of Jesus' life. We all know how much more exact and vivid early life-memories are than later ones, especially if the events remembered have had a determining effect on the person's whole life. At the same time long conversance with such memories, and comparison of them with later ideas and conditions, tend to reduce them to simpler and clearer terms. The fact, which as embodied in teaching or event may at the time of it have been hard to understand, has with growth of years

[1] See note, p. 576, above. For the broaching of this Lazarus question, see article by James Jones, B. Sc., in *The Interpreter*, July, 1914. Professor H. B. Swete thinks that the young man mentioned in Mark x, 21, subsequently returned and became known as the beloved disciple; see *Journal of Theological Studies*, July, 1916. Professor Garvie thinks that this disciple was himself the householder in whose upper room the last supper was held; see "Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus," p. 351. These facts show how uncertain the case of John the son of Zebedee has come to be held.

become luminous with meanings not sensed before; or, in other words, has revealed its real and permanent values. Such is the unique distinction of the fourth gospel. It is written with the avowed purpose of giving the supreme values of the great Christian fact: to make the men of a later time see the divinity of Christ as it is and commit themselves to it. To this end the author does not profess to give all the facts of Jesus' ministry, but only such selection of facts as makes for his purpose; facts so proportioned and coördinated as to make his work an exposition by narration. "Many other signs," he writes, "did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John xx, 30, 31).

NOTE. *The Author's Purpose.* Browning has depicted in a masterly way the genesis and purpose of the fourth gospel, in his poem "A Death in the Desert"; which represents the aged John, as his dying act, explaining how he retold the life of Christ to meet the gainsayers of his late day:

> I never thought to call down fire on such,
> Or, as in wonderful and early days,
> Pick up the scorpion, tread the serpent dumb;
> But patient stated much of the Lord's life
> Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work;
> Since much that at the first, in deed and word,
> Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,
> Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
> Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
> Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
> Of new significance and fresh result;
> What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
> And named them in the Gospel I have writ.[1]

For the allusions in the passage, cf. Luke ix, 54; Mark xvi, 18; Acts xxviii, 3–6. The whole spiritual and literary process, wherein the divine revelation and the human intuition are alike honored, is here indicated.

[1] Browning, "A Death in the Desert," ll. 163–175.

As belonging to the literature both of fact and of values, the fourth gospel calls for brief consideration in these two aspects.

Its Contribution of Fact

There was no occasion at the time this gospel was written to retell the whole story of Jesus' ministry, as the synoptic gospels were already long current and standard; nor was the author minded to correct erroneous statements of the synoptics, though in a few cases he silently does so. His object evidently was to supplement them by giving some parts and aspects of Jesus' ministry which they had not had so good opportunity, or ability, to narrate. The most important of this supplementary matter relates to Jesus' ministry in Judea, which he is represented to have conducted in connection with his visits to the Jewish feasts at Jerusalem. The other gospels are almost entirely confined to his ministry in Galilee and among the common people; this more predominantly to his teaching at the capital and among the leaders of religion and culture: a fact which may in part account for its more esoteric and as it were scholarly tone, and for Jesus' almost defiant assertion of his divine warrant and claims, as against a stubborn and unspiritual educated class.[1] Without this account of his contact with the culture and bigotry of his time our idea of the rounded completeness of his ministry would be essentially lacking; with it his work is balanced and proportioned as we should expect so momentous a work to be.

It is from this gospel that we get the best notion of the length as well as of the distribution of Jesus' ministry; this because the feast seasons, at which he made his periodical visits to Jerusalem, form a chronological series of landmarks, from which it is deduced that his public ministry, for whose measurement the synoptists furnish only scant data, lasted somewhat over three years. And as for its personal relations, we are in this gospel brought in contact not only with the

[1] This is considered under "His Utterances in Divine Character"; see preceding, pp. 561 f.

Jewish leaders whose antipathy to Jesus was so violent, but also with the more spiritually minded ones who after his ascension would form an important element of loyalty and learning in the years of the early Christian cause.

Nor was it among the leaders alone and in public encounters, nor even predominantly so, that he is represented as moving and ministering. This gospel, if more mystic and sublime than the others, is also more intimately human, more companionable, as it were more domestic. It is this gospel that records Jesus' attendance at the wedding in Cana (ii, 1–11), his conversations with Nicodemus (iii, 1–21) and the woman of Samaria (iv, 1–42), his interviews with the invalid at Bethesda (v, 2–18) and with the man born blind (ix, 1–41), his reception of the Greeks who came to worship at the feast (xii, 20–32), and his friendship with the family at Bethany, where he raised Lazarus from the dead (xi, 1–44) and where at a supper given him one of the sisters of Lazarus anointed his feet (xii, 1–8). Thus, in portraying the highest Being that ever walked our earth as the most human too, this gospel furnishes an important balancing element to the synoptics.

Its Realistic Sense of Divine Values

Unlike the matter-of-fact consciousness of the synoptics, and the dialectic disposition of St. Paul, the tone of this gospel is eminently intuitive and penetrative: the work of a mind which, without having to pass through intermediate stages of premise and inference, sees the bearings and ultimate reaches of truth as it were visually and at once. Such a mind does not argue, it asserts; its view of truth is not relative but absolute. This trait of it, uncommonly keen by nature, was doubtless enhanced by the long reflection and seasoning through which until extreme old age the author's memory of things passed. Of him we may say, more truly than did Matthew Arnold of Sophocles, that it was he

> Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;

only, that life which he saw was embodied in one supreme Personality, whose life was the light of men.

Hence the life of Jesus is in this gospel portrayed not as common and bewildered men first saw it, or as it appears from a matter-of-fact level, but as a man of intuitive genius came to realize its inner and perfected meanings. Beyond other Scripture books this retold story, with its pendant the First Epistle of John, is the great summarizer, the great definer of terms. It begins by introducing Jesus not as a child nor as a consecrated minister but as "the Word," which from the beginning expressed the thought and spirit of God; which created all things; which becoming flesh and dwelling among men was the light of their true life and gave them power to become sons of God. From the moment he is thus transcendently introduced, however, the events of his ministry are narrated not allegorically but in such realistic terms as connote the observation of an eye-witness, yet with such simple sublimity as beseems the divine personality and wisdom and power. No other gospel is made up so uniformly of Jesus' words and acts in divine character; yet in none is the manhood more self-consistent and homogeneous in the realistic sense of its derivation from the divine.

Its Author's Personality

As we have seen, the certificate which at the end of the gospel identifies the disciple whom Jesus loved with the one who "beareth witness of these things and wrote these things" adds the words, "we know that his witness is true" (John xxi, 24). How did the writers of this affidavit know? It does not seem likely that they were aged contemporaries of his, themselves eyewitnesses of the gospel facts; rather, it would seem, there was something in his personality, and perhaps in his experience, which was an absolute voucher for the truth of his statements. The question is important because of the well-meant but impersonal criticism which the book has encountered.

Its style is so different from that of the synoptics, and bears the marks of so much maturer thought, that it did not seem, on critical grounds, to deal with the actual words and deeds of the Jesus whom the synoptists portray. The difficulty is a real one; but to meet it negatively raises a problem greater than it solves. If the words and works of Jesus here recorded are not substantially authentic (and the criticism hinges on this), we must needs find an author who could have invented them and he must have a mind and personality of the Christ caliber. The spirit of the book is utterly inconsistent with being a literary *tour de force* manufactured either out of some writer's head or out of an evolved Christian consciousness. The intrinsic character of the words and acts makes them the despair of literary invention. The line of least resistance, it seems, is to accept, as the certificate does, a personality specially gifted and prepared, who could so remember and assimilate the deeper and diviner elements of Jesus' revelation of himself as to reproduce them accurately and adequately. It is to the unnamed author's personality that we must look, to his exceptional spiritual and intuitional endowments.

What these endowments were, or at least their spring and impulsion, he himself reticently intimates in his characterization of himself as "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (John xiii, 23). It was by love that the Master's inmost heart was revealed to him; it was by an answering love (for love is a reciprocal thing) that he could absorb and retain the things of Christ which went so much deeper than others could see. The Master had said, on his last meeting with his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi, 12); he had also said of the Spirit of truth whom he would send, "He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (vs. 14). This disciple it was who remembered these words, who impressed them on a heart bound by a peculiar love

to that of Jesus, and who when men could best bear them and most needed them was spared to give them to the world. It was the world's greatest example of what Carlyle has noted of an English biographer, "inspired only by love, and the recognition and vision which love can lend." And the result we may put also in Carlyle's words, except that we must heighten his idea of nature: "That . . . Work of his is as a picture by one of Nature's own Artists; the best possible resemblance of a Reality; like the very image thereof in a clear mirror. Which indeed it was: let but the mirror be *clear*, this is the great point; the picture must and will be genuine."[1]

Thus, while the author of the fourth gospel has endeavored to efface his personality, so far as self-assertion is concerned, the wonderful insight of it and its realistic vision of the divine are evident in every line, molding it by the mind of Christ. Other traits there are also, pointing to a still more intimate sharing of the Master's purpose and thought; which, however, we will not go into here.[2]

III

The "Postscript Commendatory." This designation, which has been given by Bishop Lightfoot to the First Epistle of John, fits its character and purpose well. It is a kind of companion piece to the fourth gospel, but whether written before or after is not quite apparent, and couched in words such as a very old man, full of wonderful memories and the ideas of life derived therefrom, would write to friends and disciples so much younger that they are regarded as "little children" (cf. 1 John ii, 1, 12, 13, 18, etc.) needing guidance in the simplest but at the same time the largest and most vital values. It starts from the same realistic sense of Jesus' divine nature which we have noted in the

[1] Carlyle's Essay on Boswell's Johnson, Works, Vol. XXVIII, p. 75.

[2] Connected with the "New Surmise"; see preceding, p. 644.

gospel; labors, indeed, to express it in the most explicit terms: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life, — and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i, 1, 2). As the object of the gospel was to induce belief (John xx, 31), the object of this "postscript commendatory" is to induce fellowship in the Father and the Son, and the communal joy that results therefrom. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things we write, that our joy may be made full" (1 John i, 3, 4). It is as if the "disciple whom Jesus loved," who had received such unusual access of divine light and truth, were minded to make every man a sharer with him in the same, and so unite the world of Christian believers in one spirit and fellowship. "If we walk in the light," he says, "as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (i, 7).

NOTE. *Its Occasion.* As a modern description of its occasion, we may again quote the words of Browning, who puts the epistles of John after the Apocalypse (which he ascribes to him; see next chapter) and before his gospel but, like the gospel, in his old age:

> Then, for my time grew brief, no message more,
> No call to write again, I found a way,
> And, reasoning from my knowledge, merely taught
> Men should, for love's sake, in love's strength believe;
> Or I would pen a letter to a friend
> And urge the same as friend, nor less nor more:
> Friends said I reasoned rightly, and believed.

These words have in mind not only the first epistle of John but the second and third, written by "the elder" respectively to "the elect lady and her children" (2 John 1), and to "Gaius the beloved" (3 John 1); but the description applies equally to this first epistle.

Though anonymous, the epistle leaves no reasonable doubt that it is by the author of the gospel. As a kind of circular writing intended for the same readers as the gospel, it does not have occasion for the conventional epistolary address and salutation. Its background is the truth brought to light in the gospel story, and it is written as if the author were fresh from his intimate conversance with the life of Jesus and its deep meanings.

Substance of its Message

This epistle uses the substance of the gospel truth in two ways: as an antidote to certain false teachings that are creeping into the churches and as a summary of all that is requisite for eternal life. It is thus controversial — in its absolute way — as well as interpretative.

1. Two heresies were endangering the purity of the church in the aged disciple's day. One was that of the Nicolaitans (mentioned by name in Rev. ii, 6, 14, 15), who from a false idea of the sinlessness of Christians and the vileness of the flesh were allowing themselves to indulge in unrestrained licentiousness, as if it were of no moral significance. Against this heresy, which was rampant in Asia Minor, his condemnation is emphatic and unsparing (see i, 5; ii, 6, 15, 17; iii, 3–10). Equally so is his condemnation of another heresy, introduced by Cerinthus (the name does not occur in Scripture), whom he designates as Antichrist. This man had a theory which denied the divine nature of Jesus, distinguishing the historical Jesus from the transcendent Christ, and thus dissolving his personality in philosophic speculation. Against this the writer, fresh from his memories of the Master, opposes strenuous opposition, insisting on the truth that Jesus is the Christ, who has come in the flesh (see ii, 18–23; iv, 1–6; 13–15; v, 1–12). It may be seen how eminently fitting, at the late day when the epistle was written, this testimony of the beloved disciple who had seen and heard and touched Jesus was, in order to meet the newer needs.

2. As interpretative of the gospel truth, the epistle evinces a notable purpose to resolve its vital principles into plain terms and to propose many simple but searching tests of truth or falsity in life and faith. These tests, beginning with "Hereby we know," or "perceive" (cf. ii, 3, 5; iii, 16, 19, 24; iv, 2, 6, 13), are a very characteristic feature. The keynote of the epistle is love. It is this writer alone, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," of all the New Testament writers, who says plainly that God is love, and who makes the sweeping deduction that he who loves abides in God and God in him (iv, 8, 16), — an assertion that it requires a daring thinker to make. The test of the genuineness of such love is our love for our brother whom we have seen rather than of God whom we have not seen (iv, 20); that is, the completed fellowship for the sake of which the epistle is written. On the indications and tests of this Christian love the author's language is very absolute and emphatic. As if it were the one "word" in which the whole literature of the Bible is concentrated, he commends love as the new commandment, comprising the whole duty of man (ii, 8).

The Other Epistles

The second and third epistles of John, both very short, are addressed to private persons. To "the elect lady and her children," who are addressed in the second epistle, he gives his favorite exhortation, "that we love one another" (vs. 5), and warns against countenancing or receiving any deceiver or "antichrist" who walks not in the spirit of this fundamental virtue (vss. 7, 10). Gaius the beloved, who is addressed in the third epistle, is commended for receiving and aiding some itinerant Christian teachers, in contrast to a certain Diotrephes, apparently a domineering layman in the church, who had been morose and inhospitable toward such. Both of these epistles, though addressed to individuals, seem intended also for church counsels; and in both the writer calls himself "the elder."

CHAPTER XII

THE RESURGENCE OF PROPHECY

[Near the end of the first century]

PROPHECY was the most vital and spiritual element of the Old Testament literature. It was through the prophets that, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, God spoke "by divers portions and in divers manners" to the fathers. We have seen how the literary prophecy took its rise and ran its course in Israel.[1] Its era of about three centuries, from near the middle of the eighth to the middle of the fifth century B.C., was involved with that most momentous era of the people's history during which they suffered dissolution as a political state and reinstatement as a church; in which reinstatement the majority of the people were dispersed among the nations while their religious and educational capital remained at Jerusalem. In all this period before the dispersion the main object of prophetic activity, most clearly expressed in the Second Isaiah, was to commit the Jewish race to their ordained destiny as "the Servant of Jehovah," a conscience-bearing and missionary race. Afterward, however, prophecy, in this more specific sense, gradually subsided. The people became more interested in their past than in their future. The lack of prophetic vision, the dearth of the forward look, came to be deeply felt and deplored by the devout. "We see not our signs," mourned one of the psalmists; "there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long" (Psa. lxxiv, 9). The missionary zeal had given way to exclusiveness and

[1] See Book I, Chapters IV–VI.

racial pride. The age of prophecy had been succeeded by an age of Mosaic legalism, and scribal interpretation, and religious prescription.

Inherited Apocalyptic Elements

But in all the old literary prophecies there was a larger strain of prediction than the immediate crisis or issue demanded. From the specific message with which he was charged, which dealt with the troubled interests of his time, each prophet looked forward to an epoch of solution far beyond, to some aspect of a coming golden age, or new order of things, when God would bring judgment and deliverance, when a new spiritual covenant would be established, and when God's ultimate purpose in the world would be realized. We see touches of this peculiar strain of prophecy in Joel's picture of the "valley of decision" (Joel iii, 2, 14–17); in Isaiah and Micah's vision of "the mountain of the Lord's house" (Isa. ii, 2–4; Mic. iv, 1–3), and in the apocalyptic songs and chapters which accentuate the several stages of the Vision of Isaiah (Isa. xii; xxiv–xxvii; xxxv); in the vision of the king reigning in righteousness (Isa. xxxii, 1–8); in Jeremiah's era of a new covenant (Jer. xxxi, 31–34; xxxii, 40); in Zechariah's vision of the fate of Jerusalem (Zech. xiv, 1–8); in Ezekiel's vision of waters issuing from the restored sanctuary (Ezek. xlvii, 1–12); and in numerous other passages. The culmination of these is reached in the Second Isaiah's prediction of "new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. lxv, 17–25; lxvi, 22, 23). The prophecy of this type is by scholars called apocalyptic, from the Greek word *apokalupsis*, "a disclosure"; denoting a revelation of something before unknown to men and undiscoverable by mere human intuition.[1] Many predictions relating to imminent issues in the national or world-movement of things might be like an intuitive statesmanship interpreting historical and spiritual forces; apocalyptic vision, however, could come only from the mind

[1] Cf. above, pp. 513–515.

of God, revealing eternal purposes beyond the scope of political or religious history. This apocalyptic element furnishes in all stages of prophecy, as it were a background and far vista, giving prophecy an enduring value when its specific occasion is past and keeping the ultimate hope of Israel alive.

The Quickened Imagination

While these primitive apocalyptic elements were stored, as it were, at the back of the people's mind as a prophecy yet unfulfilled, they were couched in too broad and general terms to have a grip on men's imagination. They were stated, but not pictured; besides, they needed some shock of sharp experience to precipitate them from solution. The apocalyptic visualization, as it appears, was introduced by the Book of Daniel (cir. 165 B.C.), which, written to revive the people's hopes at the time of the Maccabean crisis and persecution, purports to give certain symbolic visions vouchsafed to Daniel in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and his Medo-Persian successors. These visions relate to the coming kingdom of heaven, which was destined to subdue and survive the kingdoms of the earth. They speak also of "One like unto a son of man," to whom "was given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii, 13, 14). To these visions are appended dates, reckoned in cryptic terms, for their fulfillment; which dates, ever since they were given, have roused no end of curiosity and conjecture. The exact nature of the issue, however, is left undefined. "And I heard," says the author, "but I understood not; then said I, 'O, my lord, what shall be the issue of these things?' And he said, 'Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end'" (Dan. xii, 8, 9).

With its picturesque and curiosity-provoking symbols, the Book of Daniel liberated to a remarkable degree the

Jewish imagination; giving rise to a flowering of apocalyptic literature, in which was more fancy than sober prophecy. Up till near the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70 this species of literature flourished, furnishing a popular imaginative release from the austerities of the law and the potterings of the scribes. There were vivid descriptions of visits to the unseen world, of the doings of angels good and bad, of the spectacular day of judgment, of the all-conquering king, and the like. Out of it all came one useful result, however: a great quickening of the popular imagination and such a concrete expectation of the coming kingdom and its Messiah as previous prophecy had not awakened. It was this expectation, with its crude or fantastic accompaniments, which, as we have seen, Jesus had at his coming to meet and reduce to sanity and correct; while at the same time all that was sound and permanent in it might be retained.

A Prophet, and More

Such is the honorable distinction that Jesus gave to his herald, John the Baptist (Matt. xi, 9). The Christian era, which John came to announce, was rather one of fulfillment than of prophecy. Prophecy's long work was done; and God, who in so many ways and portions had spoken by the prophets, was now speaking by a Son (Heb. i, 1). John was more than a prophet, because he was the messenger of fulfillment.

To give his message, however, he paid little if any attention to the popular apocalyptic, using as he did merely the current terms which answered to the kindled expectation of his time. He harked back rather to the primitive austerities of prophecy: imitating Elijah in manner, in whom prophetic methods were typical, and making use of the older ideas of the Second Isaiah and Malachi. On the basis of these he met the popular expectation so far as to announce, "The kingdom is at hand; . . . after me cometh One who is mightier than I" (cf. Matt. iii, 2, 11). Then, identifying Jesus as that Mightier One, he continued to demand the

repentance by which alone the kingdom could be prepared for, until martyrdom put an end to his preaching. Jesus too, in his turn, beginning with the same call to repentance, simplified his message by an appeal to and adoption of the older prophecy, and setting himself to the practical but at the same time spiritual details of fulfillment. So it went on till near the close of his ministry. Prophecy, in its more spacious sense of apocalyptic, would have its due resurgence, but the time had not yet come. The mind of men must first be educated to realize and believe it.

I. Toward the End of the Era

Among the apocalyptic ideas prevalent when Jesus entered upon his ministry was naturally the thought that the coming new order of things would be the end of the old. The great event was to be a turning point in history, whereat one era would reveal itself as outworn and finished and another would be inaugurated with the pomp and glory befitting so momentous a change. To the Jewish imagination this transition was to be catastrophic. All nature and history would suddenly feel it, and in a tremendous revolution which none could fail to see the new order of things would emerge. To them its meaning also was mainly political. The Roman Empire, now so universal and despotic, would collapse, and the Jewish race with its divinely ordained religion and polity would come into its own as the ruler of the world.

The end of the age would therefore be not a decay and death but a consummation; when spiritual forces, long hidden in the old order and suppressed, would burst forth into power and glory. This idea of a coming catastrophe and splendor was not peculiar to the Jews. Among the heathen also something like it was prevalent, though of course they did not connect it with the fortunes of the Jewish race.

We have seen that Jesus' task was to meet and temper and correct the ideas with which the prophetic soul of his

age was charged.[1] It was his opportunity, but also his tremendous problem, a problem to be solved only by superhuman genius. And of all the ideas then prevailing, ideas so beset with fancies and vagaries and so variously colored with crude judgments, the grand culmination was this concept of end and beginning: what and of what nature the transition would be, and how brought about. Jesus must accommodate his speech to its terms, must keep his hearers with him in the same realm of imagery, and yet withal must gradually create a new vocabulary and atmosphere congruous with his vast purpose. Above all he must begin with the primal spiritual forces of human nature and free them from alloy. And nothing so reveals his consummate wisdom as the steady, consistent way in which throughout his earthly ministry he dealt with the vital principles of his problem.

I

The Presage in Jesus' Words. He did not say much about the consummation of the age, or, as it is commonly translated, the end of the world, until near the close of his ministry; and then what he said left the matter as enigmatic in one way as it was clear in another. In two of his parables, indeed, the parable of the tares and the parable of the sweep-net as reported by Matthew (Matt. xiii, 39, 49), occurs the expression "the consummation of the age" (*sunteleia tou aiōnos*); but it is to be noted that in the gospels the term is peculiar to Matthew, who may have used it as a term current among Christians when his gospel was written. In his report of Jesus' eschatological discourse the expression occurs again in the disciples' inquiry, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. xxiv, 3), where also the word for "coming" (*parousia*, "presence") is used for the only time in the gospels. In Mark's report of the discourse, which being

[1] See "The Christ-Problem," pp. 535 ff. above.

older is presumably nearer to Jesus' exact words, the question is, "When will these things be? and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be fulfilled?" (Mark xiii, 4). The connecting of this discourse with the consummation and the *parousia* would seem to have been a deduction of the early church, to whom these ideas had become a matter of course, though Jesus' actual words may have embodied only an indirect presage. Still, a true presage it was, which from the event with which it was immediately concerned would, as time went on, enlarge into a prophecy of the greater consummation beyond. For the whole discourse, with its slightly variant forms, see Matt. xxiv, Mark xiii, Luke xxi; that of Mark being probably the most primitive.

Its Occasion

The occasion of this eschatological discourse of Jesus seems at first thought to have been casual enough. After a day of teaching in the Temple, as he went forth to the Mount of Olives, whence the view of the edifice appeared in greatest grandeur, one of the disciples called his attention to the wonders of its architecture. It was, indeed, as rebuilt by Herod, the pride and boast of the Jews, who doubtless were as confident of its permanence as they had been in the days of Jeremiah (see Jer. vii, 1–15). But he had already cleansed the Temple court of its traders and exchangers (Mark xi, 15–18; John ii, 14–20), using Jeremiah's words of reproof because it had become so worldly and commercialized (cf. Jer. vii, 11). It was his symbolic way of saying, as was said later, that judgment must "begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv, 17). And now his answer to the disciples' admiration is, "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down" (Mark xiii, 2).

Such a prediction about the Temple, and especially any implied disparagement of it, would be to the Jews almost

equivalent to blasphemy. We see this in the way they mocked him when he hung upon the cross (Mark xiv, 58; xv, 29), and in the charge they brought against him at his trial, — a distorted reminiscence of his words when he first cleansed the Temple, as recorded in the fourth gospel (see John ii, 19, 20). The truth is, Jesus' attitude toward the Temple service touched the nation in a vital spot. It reminded them, to their discomfort, that they could not play fast and loose with conscience; their long heritage was too precious to be thus made sterile.

Jesus' prophecy of events to come, called forth by his remark about the Temple, was both specific and general.

Its Substance

The specific event which was immediately identified with the destruction of the Temple was the destruction of Jerusalem and the break-up of the Jewish state, which occurred under Vespasian, when his son and general Titus besieged and demolished both city and Temple A.D. 70, forty years after these words were uttered. Of this event which, to the consciousness of disciples still uneducated in Christian experience, would be equivalent to the end of the age, the prophecy, "This generation shall not pass away until all these things shall be accomplished" (Mark xiii, 30) came literally to pass. The Hebrew and Jewish order of things, of which the Temple was the central symbol, was doomed, and that was the only order they could yet realize.

But all Jesus' descriptions of that catastrophe were pregnant with a larger and more spiritual meaning. The event would be, as it were, the clearing of the ground for the building of an order whose meanings would be universal and eternal. This larger prophecy is blended with the more specific, so that many terms of the two are interchangeable; but it still has to be expressed in conceptions which the disciples can understand. "After that tribulation," Jesus says, they shall "see the Son of Man coming in clouds

with great power and glory" (Mark xiii, 24–26). It is the same prediction that he makes two or three days later, in his confession of his Messiahship to the high priest (see Mark xiv, 61, 62). It is put in apocalyptic terms, accompanied by such portents of nature as the older prophets had associated with world events; it visualizes things, for those conceptions are not yet of the spirit but of the imagination. That is the mold in which the current idea of future things has shaped itself. Its substance, which later events have progressively verified, is that the personality of Jesus, identified with the idealized Christ, is destined to be the re-living and triumphant power of the world and of the ages. "And then shall he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (Mark xiii, 27). The completed event will be one in which not the shifting history of a state or nation alone but earth and heaven, human and divine, present and hereafter, will be involved and united.

II

In the Light of Common Day. It is to be noted that to neither of the questions raised by the disciples (Mark xiii, 4) does Jesus return a specific answer. He neither tells them when these things will be nor what shall be the sign. It is another instance of what we have noticed in all the large forecasts of the future: a foreshortened prophecy, in which the essential is kept clear from the incidental. To the former question his answer is, "Of that day and hour knoweth no one; not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii, 32). To the latter question he replies not by a sign but by an analogy, such an analogy as the wise can gather from the familiar phenomenon of the fig-tree, "when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves," — the natural prophecy of summer (Mark xiii, 28, 29). It is an appeal to men's clarified spiritual

sense. Meanwhile his call is not to speculations but to practical insight and duties. The disciples are to beware of false Christs and deceivers; are to distrust any who say, "Lo, here is the Christ" or "Lo, there"; are to take trials as they come, and discount them as in the necessary order of things; are to be faithful stewards of their divinely given trust; and are to be always ready. "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark xiii, 37).

These sane and steadying counsels became the staple of the apostolic teaching (see, for example, St. Paul's earliest epistles, those to the Thessalonians). Their influence shaped the personal character which made the early Christian communities a notable contrast to the world around them. When we reflect that the gospels as we have them were not written till after the Pauline and other epistles, the evident effect here noted provokes the conclusion that this prophecy of Jesus must have been circulated and well known from the time it was uttered. It is, indeed, thought to have been current among the churches as a kind of tract apart from the gospels in which we read it, and to have been incorporated in the completed gospels afterward.[1]

II. The Revelation of John

The resurgence of prophecy in its most pronounced apocalyptic[2] form is evidenced in the last book of the Bible, written late in the first century A.D., and entitled "The Revelation (*apokalupsis*) of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." It was written by "his servant John," an exile in Patmos; but whether this was the apostle John the son of Zebedee is uncertain. It is written in a vein somewhat similar to that of the fourth gospel and the Epistles of John, which fact has caused a general belief that the same author wrote all

[1] See Burkitt, "The Gospel History and its Transmission," pp. 62, 63.

[2] For the beginnings of apocalyptic prophecy, see above, p. 147, note 2.

the works at different periods of his life. Like the gospel, it views Jesus as the unique Son of God; and like the uniform Christian teachings it regards him as not yet come in the fullness of his kingdom and power, but as revealing in mystic and symbolic language the manner and accompaniments of his coming, and the final things after the turmoils and tribulations of history are over.

NOTE. *Its Supposed Relationship to John's Works.* Browning thus explains its relation, as purely reported prophecy, to the general teaching of the evangelist John, whom he regards as its author:

> Since I, whom Christ's mouth taught, was bidden teach,
> I went, for many years, about the world,
> Saying, "It was so; so I heard and saw,"
> Speaking as the case asked: and men believed.
> Afterward came the message to myself
> In Patmos isle; I was not bidden teach,
> But simply listen, take a book and write,
> Nor set down other than the given word,
> With nothing left to my arbitrament
> To choose or change: I wrote, and men believed.[1]

I

The Apocalyptic Warrant. Like its prototype the Book of Daniel, the Revelation of John comes from a time of fierce persecution; and one object of it doubtless was to stay and comfort the oppressed church with a sure conviction of hope and triumph. But this is far from giving its whole or its main purpose. Its warrant lay in the bosom of the church itself, which was filled with tendencies that needed to be corrected and clarified.

In the general expectation of Christ's coming, or parousia, there were many elements yet unexplained and in danger of atrophy through unbelief. The Second Epistle of Peter, written under conditions similar to those of the Revelation, mentions the godless mockers of the time as saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?

From Present Perils

[1] Browning, "A Death in the Desert," ll. 135–144.

for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. iii, 4). This would seem to point to a widespread prevalence of the sentiment that Christianity was not the radical regenerative power it was meant to be; in modern terms, was not "making good." This sentiment would naturally be made much of by the foes and critics of the new life, who could judge it only from without. But also within the Christian community were dangers of much the same kind, which threatened the purity and even the existence of the distinctive Christian life. Such dangers had been warned against in the letters to Timothy (1 Tim. i, 20; 2 Tim. ii, 17, 18); and men had been singled out by name whose word, as was said, would "eat as doth a gangrene." The First Epistle of John, as we have noted,[1] was largely concerned to oppose two such perils (essentially rather than by name): that of the Nicolaitans, who used their Christian profession as a cloak for licentiousness; and that of Cerinthus, whom, because he denied that the Christ of the flesh could be divine, the epistle brands as antichrist.

The general tendency of these corrupting influences seems to have been twofold: to undifferentiate the Christian character, merging it in the sensuality and immorality of the world; and to make men dead to the value, and even the belief, of Christ's parousia. The presence of these evil tendencies is apparent in the messages to the Seven Churches which John prefixes to his Revelation (chapters ii and iii); some of which he warns against Nicolaitan and similar infections (for example, Pergamum, ii, 15 and cf. Ephesus, vs. 6; Thyatira, ii, 20), and others he rebukes for being spiritually dead or lukewarm (Sardis, iii, 1; Ephesus, ii, 4; Laodicea, iii, 15). To men of such tendency the sharp persecution which called forth the Apocalypse would be less a calamity than a providence, testing the real fiber of their Christian

[1] See above, p. 653.

allegiance; and a prophecy which would concentrate their life anew on the supreme issues of Christ's coming would be fully warranted by prevailing conditions. Such a prophecy was the Revelation of John.

But there was more in the function of such a prophecy than to be a prophylactic against encroaching evils; so much more that this is only incidental. In the literature of prophecy which the Christians had inherited from Old Testament times there was still a vast amount yet unfilled and unidentified. Its glowing oracles, its symbols, its realistic portrayals of a new order of things, were largely inert and unvalued, like so much useless lumber; and this state of things was aggravated by the general apathy that was invading the church. Something had been done by such works as the Epistle to the Hebrews to apply the prophetic values of the old régime; but much remained to be done. A new prophecy was needed to validate the old.

From Inherited Ideas

Especially was this true of the most sweeping and comprehensive prophecy of all: the Second Isaiah's prophecy of new heavens and a new earth (Isa. lxv, 17–25; lxvi, 22, 23). The time was passing and wickedness was increasing, with less and less likelihood of its fulfillment. The author of Second Peter, whom we may regard as a kind of understudy of the Johannine epistles, felt acutely the reproaches which such unfulfilled promises were eliciting. He reiterates the primitive Christian conviction that Christ's parousia will be accompanied by fiery destruction and judgment (2 Pet. iii, 7). He explains its delay by the idea that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day" (2 Pet. iii, 8). But as the upshot of it all, denying slackness on the part of the Lord, he plants his faith on Isaiah's crowning prophecy: "But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii, 13). All the vicissitudes of history and nature are but preliminary to this. And this, as the

final and crowning prophecy of the Apocalypse, the calm consummation after all its visualized turmoils and storms, evinces the abundant warrant for its existence. It is not only a prophecy in itself; it is a summary and concentration of prophecy, as this has accumulated through ages of history and literature.

II

Its Symbolism, Inherited and Initiated. The Book of Revelation takes us over into the prophetic realm, which of itself requires an educated and spiritualized sense to realize; and withal it is prophecy of a specific kind, namely, prophetic vision. It aims to portray the ultimate meanings of Biblical evolution in terms of the visible and audible.

A vision, to be made intelligible to others, must be visualized, that is, put into terms of sense perception; for it is by the organs of sense that men in the flesh communicate with one another. But beyond the sensible image there is an inner meaning, which can be apprehended only as the vision awakens in the one to whom it is told a spiritual state similar to that of the teller. If the hearer has no such susceptibility to receive, the vision is to him only a grotesque and a monstrosity; it is like trying to appreciate music without a musical ear, or color when one is color-blind. In other words, the visual image is a symbol. It directs the mind inward to a spiritual truth or principle so analogous to the material phenomenon that in those who have the proper susceptibility the one elicits the other.

A prophetic vision is thus like Jesus' parables on a larger scale. He spoke these to the "outsiders," as he said, in order that they might see and yet not see (cf. Mark iv, 11, 12).[1] To unlock their meaning men must have the fitting spiritual combination; or, as he expressed it, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. xi, 15; xiii, 9, 16).

[1] See above, p. 549.

In the same manner, of all the messages to the seven churches in Asia the author of the Revelation says, "He who hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev. ii, 7, 11, 17, 29; iii, 6, 13, 22); and of a particularly enigmatic oracle he says, "Let him who hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man" (Rev. xiii, 18); just as of a mysterious reference to Daniel in his prophetic discourse Jesus said, "Let him that readeth understand" (Mark xiii, 14). The symbolism, like the ancient mysteries, is for the initiated.

The symbolic visions of Revelation, however, are by no means run-wild or arbitrary. They have their roots in the literature and traditions which from time immemorial have been the education of Jews and Christians; who are already at home in its conceptions and vocabulary. Their design, indeed, is not to propound a mystery but to clear it up: the mystery which, as St. Paul says, "hath been hid for ages and generations: but now is made manifest to his saints, . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i, 26, 27). To the sharing of such visions there is no arbitrary bar. It requires only what is promised to all Christians: the endowment of the Spirit and consciousness of Christ.

Figurative and Literal

When at the outset of his disclosure John writes, "After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven" (Rev. iv, 1), we have no warrant for deeming this a literal view into the arcana of the universe, as it were into sensible phenomena. To interpret it so vulgarizes it into a peep show, on a level with alleged psychic disclosures, and raises interminable difficulties, from which the too literal-minded and materialized church has suffered much. Besides, the whole tenor of scripture thought is against it. In remarkable contrast to the speculations of other religions, the Scripture prophets and apostles are reticent about the literal aspects of the unseen and the hereafter. St. Paul relates (2 Cor. xii, 2–4) that he once knew

a man who was caught up to the third heaven; but no description is attempted of what he saw, and what he heard was "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter"; he was uncertain, indeed, whether the man who saw and heard (he means of course himself) was in the body or out of it. This well represents the sane and reverent attitude of the Christian mind toward another state of being. Its quickened spiritual sense represses a vulgar curiosity.

NOTE. *The Finer View.* Tennyson, in "In Memoriam," xxxi–xxxiii, notes this reticence in the case of Lazarus, and the lack of curiosity on the part of Mary, with their effects on religious faith. Of her postulated question to Lazarus,

> "Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"

(cf. John xi. 39) the poet remarks,

> There lives no record of reply
> Which telling what it is to die
> Had surely added praise to praise . . .
> Behold a man raised up by Christ!
> The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
> He told it not, or something seal'd
> The lips of that Evangelist.

The same reticence is shown with regard to the Supreme Being. The circumstances of the vision may require that He be identified, as is the case in the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Apocalyptist; but Isaiah sees only His skirts filling the Temple (Isa. vi, 1); Ezekiel describes only a mystic human form in terms of fire and color (Ezek. i, 26, 27); and John, when he first mentions the occupant of the "great white throne," describes Him merely as resembling precious stones (Rev. iv, 3), and later as One "from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away" (Rev. xx, 11). Evidently it is not intended that the pictured scenery and activities of the unseen state of being should be taken literally.

But this does not imply that these things are unreal. They deal rather with the inner truth of things than with

their visualized appearance. The fact that they are described in symbol is a virtual confession that they are so crowded with spiritual meanings that no one sensible object and no single figure can express them. Take as illustration one of the simplest, the first description of the Son of Man in glory (Rev. i, 13–16). The form, in its splendor of light and flame, is not greatly unlike what the three disciples saw on the Mount of Transfiguration (cf. Mark ix, 3). But when there are added stars in his hand, and a sword coming from his mouth (cf. Isa. xi, 4; xlix, 2), we must have recourse to symbol to preserve its verisimilitude. The same may be said of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, identical with the Lamb "as it had been slain," who prevailed to open the seals of the book (Rev. v, 5, 6). As symbol it is sublime and luminously significant; and only so. To go on with other familiar symbols, like the great white throne, the city four-square, the streets of gold, the gates of pearl, the river of the water of life, the book of life, is to reach the same result. Not only do we know what they mean, but they raise in our minds a sense of sublimity, purity, and perfection of being, such as no literal words could express, and perhaps no other figures. To deem the book unreal because it is symbolical is but to confess one's own spiritual density and limitation.

Symbol and History

It is important to keep in mind that this Book of Revelation stands at the end, the culminating point, of the Bible. A world-long history has preceded it, and a coördinated literature many centuries in the making — history and literature charged throughout with prophetic values. It leaves us with a new chapter of history opened, in which the same spiritual forces here revealed are going on to new conquests and triumphs until the last great battle is fought and the Christ is fully come. Generations and ages are yet to inscribe their names and deeds in a new Book of Life (cf. Rev. xx, 12); for the end of the Bible is not conceived

as an end but as a beginning. That an author like John should thus take his stand between the old and the new, at once summarizing and forecasting such a vast world movement, nothing less or other than a most intrepid symbolism, like a crowded yet creative stenography, could suffice. His ideas must be projected on an immense scale; must cover a limitless range; must withal have the unity and consistency of one work of literary art. It is a stupendous undertaking.

Accordingly, he writes as an heir of the literary ages before him. The Revelation of John may be regarded as a clearing house of the symbolic language which has been used to convoy the history of God's work and purpose hitherto. Several of the old prophets, notably Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel, have employed the idiom freely; not to speak of the numerous apocalyptic touches scattered through all the Old Testament prophecy and poetry. The Book of Isaiah, as we have seen, resolves itself into a "vision" (Isa. i, 1) of a whole prophetic era, beginning with a people on the verge of doom and ending with the promise of new heavens and a new earth. There is this to be noted, however, of the Old Testament symbolism: it is nearer to the literal, it works itself out in terms of historic forces and redeeming personalities here on this earth. It belongs rather to the era of prophecy than of fulfillment, to a state of things confessedly unfinal. And so, along with its religious values may be read the practical values of statesmanship, social righteousness, and law; with all of which the symbolism is vitally involved.

All these survive and find their place in this clearing house of symbolic values. Many of John's images are modeled on imagery already made familiar in prophetic history. The four living creatures, the dragon, the monstrous beast, the enslaving harlot, the field of Armageddon, Gog and Magog, reappear and have their ordained function in this summarizing book. But not only are these inherited

symbols endowed with a larger and broader meaning. To them the author adds also a rich store of new symbolism suited to the new field of prophecy here opening. For he is concerned with the principles and events of unseen and eternal realms; his history moves in both earth and heaven; and to it not human powers and personalities alone are adequate, but only the divine-human power and personality of Jesus Christ. In him all centers and culminates, not in any lower agency or dignity however celestial. When the conflicts are over and the redeemed raise their song of salvation, John is moved to worship the angel who has commissioned him to write. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, 'See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy'" (Rev. xix, 10).

III

The Reality within the Symbol. One consequence of the enigmatic character of the Revelation is that no other book of the Bible has so provoked speculation as to the literal reality underlying its daring symbolism. What, in identifiable terms, were the things which John said "must shortly come to pass"? The book has been the feeding ground of countless inquiries and conjectures, many of them deeply erudite and ingenious, all more or less futile. Their fallacy lies in their own cultural or personal equation. Either they seek to imprison its meanings in the particular generation for which the prophet wrote or else some later historical condition bulks so large in their interpretative system that the prophecy, however remote its composition, seems to have been made especially for it. The former view cramps and specializes the book too narrowly to its own age. The latter lays it open to wild theories, putting it at the mercy of speculative cranks. Against both St. Peter's

judicious words about the uses of prophecy may be cited: "We have also," he says, "a surer word of prophecy; whereto ye do well to take heed, as to a lamp which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture may be privately interpreted. For prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but men, being moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God"[1] (2 Pet. i, 19–21). This seems clearly to indicate the large scale and scope of prophecy. It is not confinable to one man's or one generation's range of vision or to any particular crisis of affairs. The fact that God is speaking through men makes its meanings vital as broadly as His Spirit works. And this range is illimitable.

The Immediate Purview

It is in the epistles to the Seven Churches (Rev. ii, iii), which are prefixed to the distinctively apocalyptic body of the book, that we get nearest to the reality within the symbol.[2] In that section the writer, in the pastoral feeling, avails himself of the prevailing letter form, though with rather elaborate literary treatment; and in giving to each church counsel accurately adapted to its situation and needs conveys as a whole "an epitome of the Universal Church and of the whole range of human life." The churches in question, which are hardly separated in thought from the cities themselves, have each their special perils from corrupting influences within and from their environment in the world; and it is predicted that some of them must pass through sharp trials (see, for example, ii, 10), in which their patience and fidelity will be tested. What these trials are, however, appears only vaguely.

The real situation underlying the elaborate symbolism of the book and its immediate occasion appears more definitely in the apocalypse itself, though at this distance of time it is not easily identifiable in its details, as it could be by

[1] Translation of "The Corrected English New Testament."

[2] See Ramsay, "The Letters to the Seven Churches," Chapter IV.

contemporaries who were wise to interpret the signs of the times. It was a period of persecution — when the Roman Empire, in the person of some of its infamous emperors, was stirred against the Christians and sought to extirpate them or force them to heathenism. Such hostilities were begun by Nero A.D. 64, in a policy of persecution which remained in force with greater or less severity through the century, attaining its greatest fierceness under Nero himself in the few years succeeding 64 and under Domitian in the last decade of the century.[1] The legislated deification of the Roman emperors, which characterized this period and which filled the provinces with the temples, customs, and coinage of this blasphemous cult, would of itself make the lot of the Christians a hard one. St. John, their most conspicuous leader in Asia Minor, wrote the book as a persecuted exile in the island of Patmos (Rev. i, 9), but whether he has in mind the trials under Nero or under Domitian is uncertain. The generally strained and perilous situation for Christendom and the call for patience, watchfulness, and courage, the virtues inculcated in the presage of Jesus' words, were the same in either case.

The writer's immediate purview, however, touches only one point of the immense reality which forms the subject of his prophecy. His real theme is the ultimate triumph of the Messianic kingdom of God, which had been dimly foreshadowed by Daniel and the Jewish Apocalyptists, and which had been evolving since the foundation of the world (cf. 1 Pet. i, 19, 20; Matt. xxv, 34). In countless symbolic references and allusions drawn from the vast store of heathen, Jewish, and Christian imagery, the mighty conflict is depicted, as in a world-epic, and concentrated in a tremendous battle of world-forces, typified on the one side by the Roman Empire and on the other by the Church of Christ. This was the reality, as expressed in

The Culminating Event

[1] See Swete, "The Apocalypse of John," pp. lxxxi–xc.

terms of history: a battle of spiritual forces which later ages have proved and are still proving to have been accurately prophesied.

"Two Empires," says Bishop Westcott,[1] "two social organizations, designed to embrace the whole world, started together in the first century. . . . In principle, in mode of action, in sanctions, in scope, in history they offer an absolute contrast. . . . The history of the Roman Empire is from the first the history of a decline and fall . . . the history of the Christian Empire is from the first the history of a victorious progress." The informing spirit of the first is like that of a monstrous beast, set on and inspired by Satan the arch-enemy of mankind, "the dragon, the old serpent" (Rev. xx, 2; cf. Gen. iii, 1; Isa. li, 9 A.V.), whose powers emanate from the pit of all corruption and foulness. The informing spirit of the second is like that of a Lamb, "as it had been slain" (Rev. v, 6), who at the throne of God "prevailed" to open the seven-sealed book of destiny, and who as "the root and the offspring of David" works out to salvation and redemption the eternal purpose of God (Rev. xxii, 16). Agencies of contrasted nature, demoniac and angelic, employing natural forces and human energies, carry on the conflict in unseen regions; while with every new onset the saints are exhorted to steadfastness and courage, and the celestial hosts raise songs of joy. So the mighty campaign goes on.

The culmination of it all is typified in two cities, standing respectively for the worldly and the spiritual capitals of the earth: the licentious and despotic city named Babylon but unmistakably identified as Rome (Rev. xvii, 9, 18), over whose downfall a song like the old-time taunt songs is raised[2] (Rev. xviii, 2–20; cf. Isa. xiv, 4–20); and the holy

[1] "Epistles of St. John," p. 253. Quoted here from Swete, "The Apocalypse of St. John," p. lxxxi.

[2] For the taunt song, as a species of mashal, see above, p. 69.

city New Jerusalem, which is beheld "coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi, 2; cf. Isa. lxii, 1–5; lxv, 18, 19).

Thus as a purified municipality, a perfected social organization, from which all that defiles and disintegrates is banished, this culminating vision of God's great purpose leaves us. It is the summary of an epic portrayal which, with all its wealth of symbolic imagery, is beyond expression sublime. And it lays hold on the deepest elements of human and divine nature, the elements which, walking in the light, as He is in the light, have fellowship one with another. For the perfected city, the "Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all."[1]

[1] Gal. iv, 26 (A. V.).

VETERI · TESTAMENTO · NOVVM · LATET ·
NOVO · TESTAMENTO · VETUS · PATET ·

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